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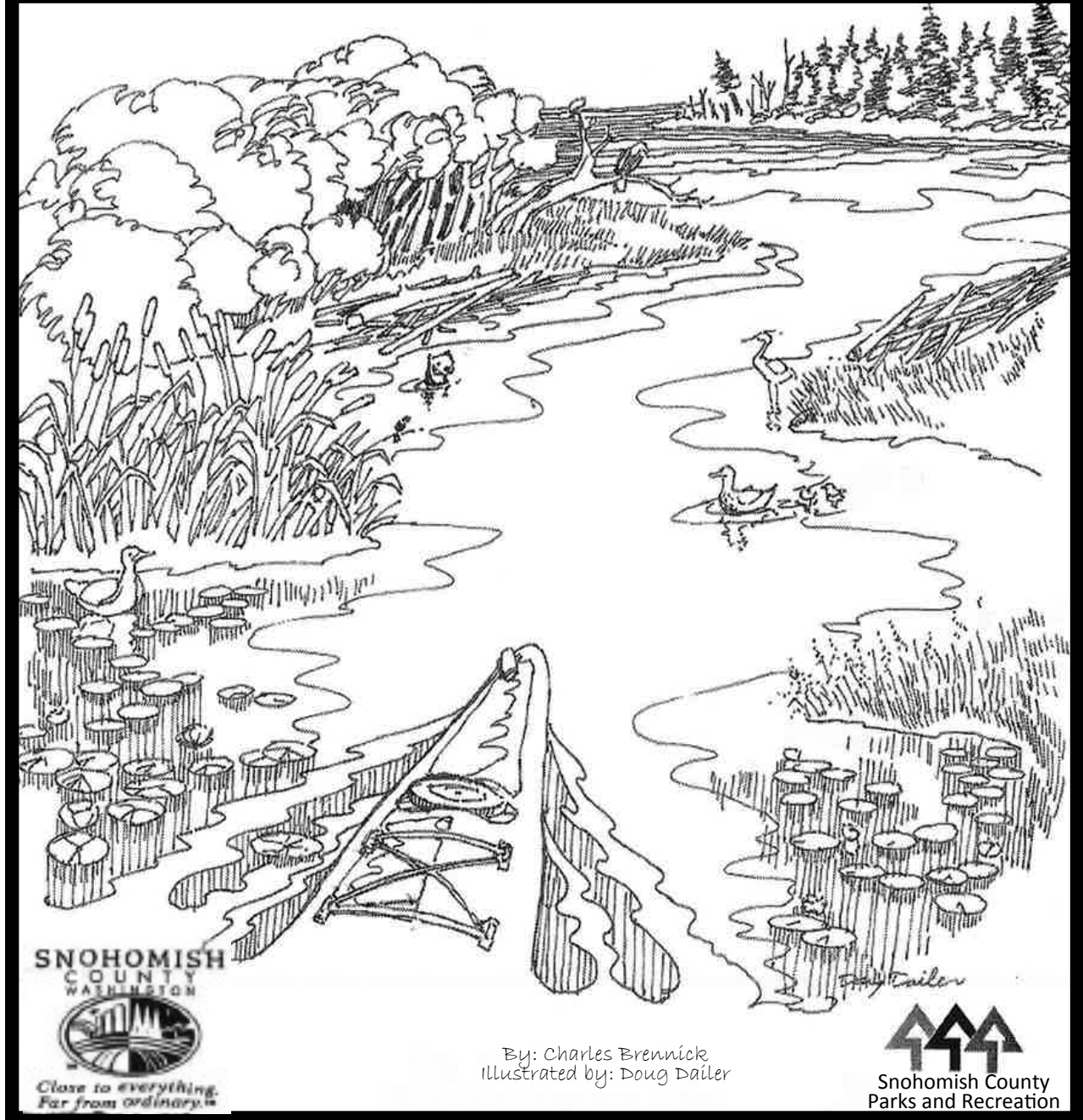
Presented here is a copy of our popular Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Guide. Originally published in 1999, printing was discontinued in 2006. This scanned copy has been reformatted (to allow you to print it), but it has not been revised or updated. Due to equipment limitations, the resolution is, regrettably, poor. That said, much of its information is timeless, and we hope this copy continues to bring you enjoyment and insight to one of our most fascinating resources.

- Snohomish County Parks & Recreation



SNOHOMISH RIVER ESTUARY RECREATION GUIDE

To better understand, enjoy, and preserve the Snohomish River Estuary



Published and Distributed by
Snohomish County Parks and Recreation

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For further information on Snohomish County outdoor recreation opportunities visit our website at:
www.co.snohomish.wa.us/parks

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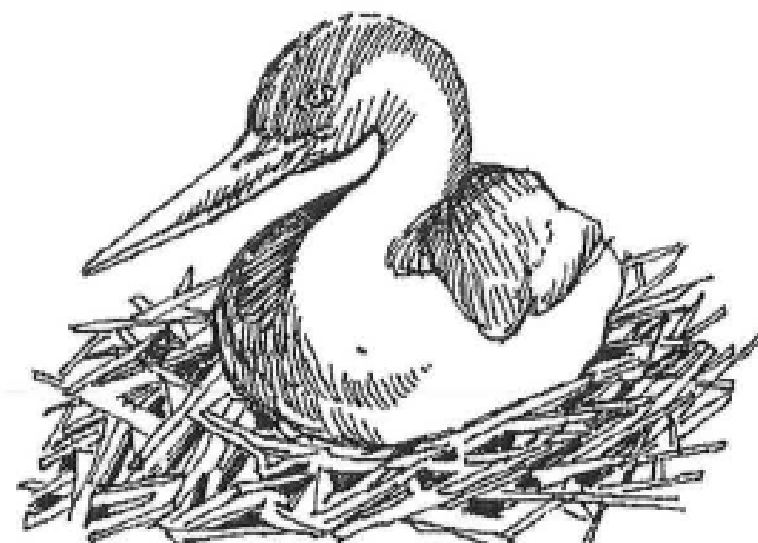
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WELCOME TO THE ESTUARY

Located just off Interstate 5 near Everett, one of Washington's largest cities, is a little known area called the Snohomish River Estuary. This is a unique place where the nutrient rich waters of the Snohomish River come in contact with the saltwater of Possession Sound. The overlapping of fresh and salt waters creates an area more productive in plant and animal species than a tropical rainforest. At least 350 different kinds of birds and countless varieties of mammals and plants call this special place home. This abundance of ideal wildlife habitat is the primary reason the Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife continue working to conserve large areas of it.

Historically the Snohomish River Estuary's wetland geography, which is appealing to wildlife yet less useful for development, has helped to protect the estuary. Although many threats remain, difficulty in developing this land has allowed an urban wildlife sanctuary to form. This exceptional setting provides views of wildlife, paddle routes, hiking trails and fishing holes typical of much more isolated areas. With this guide book and map in hand, you are a welcome visitor. Please give this special place the respect it deserves and leave it as you have found it, or better.

As you hike or paddle you may notice interesting structures or paths that are not mentioned in the guide. If so, complete the Trip Survey at the end of this booklet and mail it to Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department. This will help us produce an even better guide in the future.



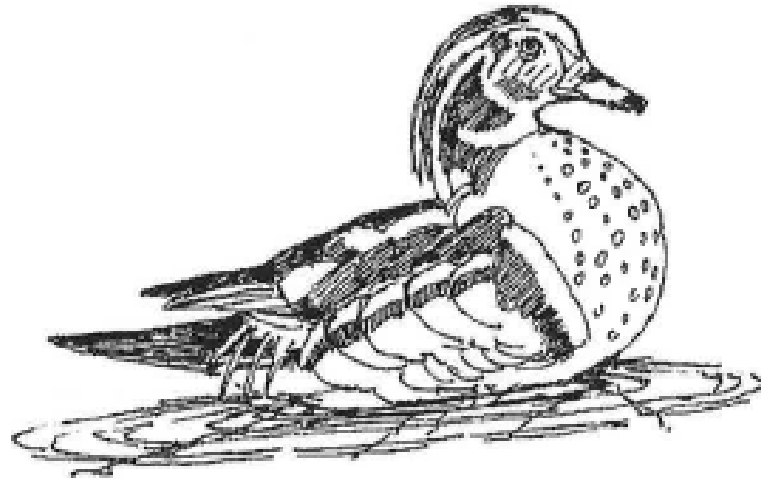
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HOW THE ESTUARY WAS FORMED

The Snohomish River Estuary was formed over the past 10,000 years, as rising sea levels submerged the coast and drowned the mouth of the river valley. Mud and sediment from both the sea and the rivers settled to the bottom, resulting in a network of curving river channels and saltwater sloughs meandering through the fanned out deposits of sediments.

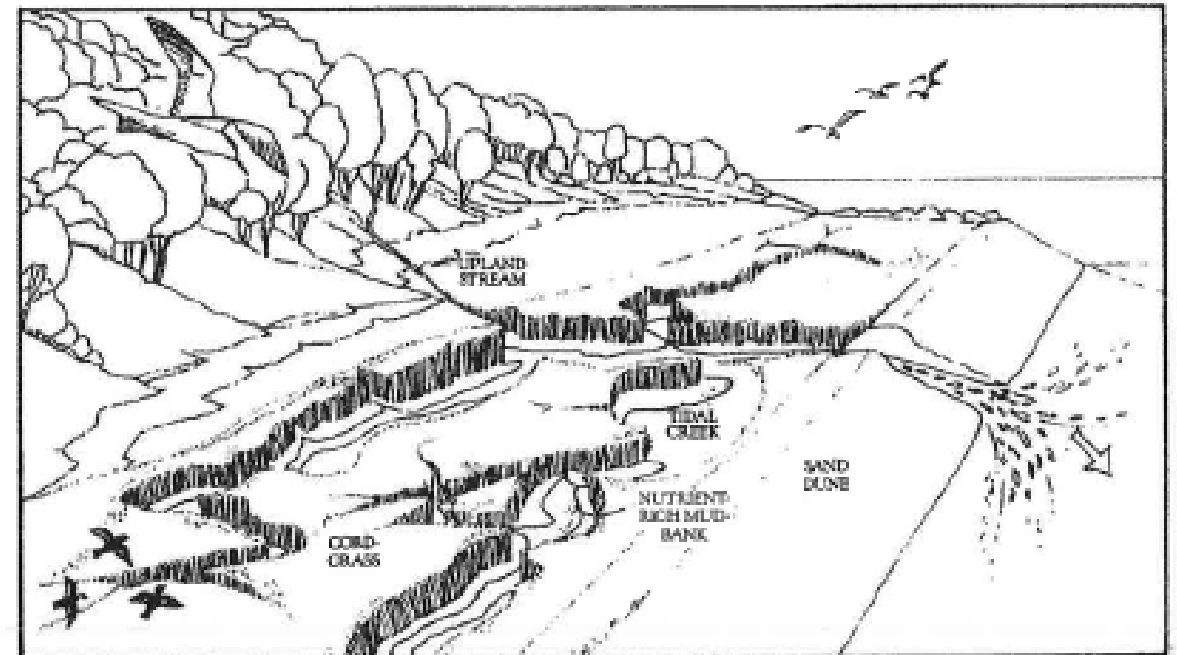
As you travel inland, the shoreline varies dramatically with gentle mudflats giving way to steep earthen dikes and rocky banks. The influence of the tides and currents changes with the balance of salt and fresh water. These combined factors create several distinct habitats to explore within the estuary.

Years of sediment accumulation and erosion formed the present boundaries of the Snohomish River Estuary. Today the estuary is approximately nine miles long and three to four and a half miles broad at its widest point, encompassing six major islands within its 19.5 square miles. It lies at the mouth of the Snohomish River which is the second largest Puget Sound watershed, consisting of 1,780 square miles of land and water. Two main tributaries to the Snohomish River, the Skykomish and Snoqualmie, are within this basin and converge 23 miles upstream from the mouth of the estuary near the city of Monroe.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

A wetland is land that is flooded with shallow water either part or all of the time. Wetlands occur along the edges of other aquatic areas, such as lake shores, slow-moving rivers, or ocean coastlines. Wetlands can be freshwater, salt water, or a combination of both, called brackish. Many areas of the Snohomish River Estuary have brackish wetlands. Freshwater wetlands include bogs, Swamps, and Marshes. Mangrove swamps and salt marshes are coastal wetlands. Wetlands exist in hot and cold climates all over the world. They are extremely rich ecosystems. People used to think they were "waste" land and drained them for other uses. Today, we know that wetlands clean the water that filters into underground springs and aquifers, soak up floodwaters like a sponge, help to regulate the flow of rivers and streams, and provide rich feeding grounds and nurseries for fish, birds, and animals.



THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

OWNERSHIP

Regardless of whether you are visiting the estuary by land or by water, you always need to be aware of whose property you are on. This will allow you to stay clear of a protected wildlife reserve and to avoid trespassing on private property, which could have serious consequences. County and private land boundaries are defined in the guide book's map. County land is considered public. The county owns a large portion of the estuary, including areas of Ebey Island, Otter Island and Spencer Island. However, the county allows public access to only Spencer Island. The land around the Everett, Marysville and Snohomish sewer lagoons is also publicly owned, as is the land owned by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

All rivers and sloughs are public right of ways and there are no constraints to their access. Shoreline ownership, on the other hand, is a complex issue. Some property lines go only to the high-water mark, which means large portions of the river banks are public.

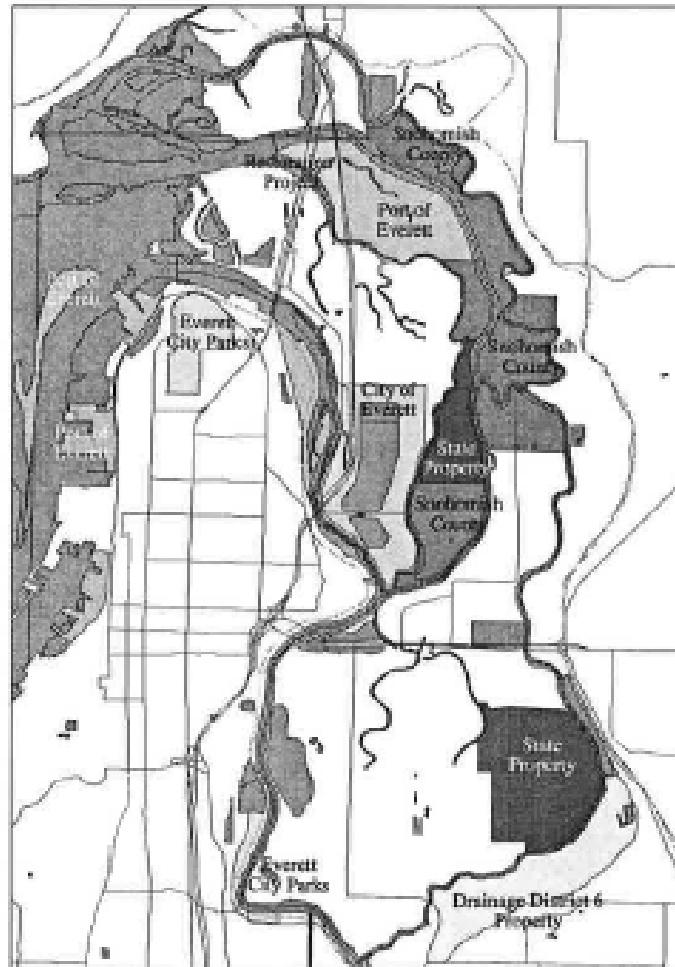
Other property lines go to the middle of the river. Some property owners own both sides of the river banks. This discrepancy between property ownership policies is why we strongly advise you to only launch or hike in designated areas.

The Port of Everett owns the Biringer Farm property on North Spencer Island, Jetty Island and sections of north Smith Island. Everett Parks and Recreation Department manages Jetty Island during the summer months.

The shoreline and tidelands along the Priest Point coast and north of Tulalip Bay, which includes the Quilceda Creek wetlands, are part of the Tulalip Reservation. Their use is managed by the Tulalip Tribes.

In general, if you are not sure if the land you want to access is public or private, stay off of it. Respect property owner's rights.

For further information on land ownership in the estuary contact Snohomish County or Everett Parks Recreation departments, or the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.



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HUNTING

Hunting, especially duck hunting, is a traditional use of the estuary. However, due to habitat depletion the number of species that are available to hunt has declined. Hunting is not allowed on private land without the property owner's permission. The most common publicly accessible area to hunt within the estuary is located on the north end of Spencer Island. This area was purchased with funds from Ducks Unlimited.

Land ownership is extremely variable in the estuary. The rivers and sloughs are considered public property. Some property owners own the land along the riverbanks, some do not. Each landowner has different ownership privileges for their waterway land. Contact the owner about hunting near and especially on their property to avoid conflict. The Department of Fish and Wildlife can supply further information regarding hunting regulations in the estuary.

FISHING

The waters and wetlands of the Snohomish River Estuary are unique. They receive nutrients from saltwater and freshwater resources, which means the river can and does support more plants and animals than the adjacent saltwater and freshwater systems. As a result of this wealth, the Snohomish River estuary provides abundant fishing opportunities. For more information on what to fish for, where and when, plus regulations and maps, contact the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

WALKING

The network of channels and many wetlands makes it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to explore much of the estuary by foot. Areas dry enough to walk on have more than likely been drained by local residents, generally for agricultural use. Another complication is that many areas are privately owned. It is often difficult to determine where public land ends and private land begins. Fortunately, a few places in the estuary have been designated for hiking by the Snohomish County and Everett Parks Department.

CAMPING / LODGING

Currently, no campsites exist in the estuary. A few private campgrounds are located in the surrounding cities. The nearest county park camping is at Kayak Point, northwest of Marysville north of the Tulalip Reservation. The waterfront park not only offers tent and RV camping, it also has a Yurt village, semipermanent tent structures.

The following is a list of hotels located on the waterfront at Marina Village, kayaking distance to the estuary.

Marina Village Inn 1728 W Marine View Dr
425-259-4040

The Inn at Port Gardner 1700 W Marine View Dr
425-252-6779

For a complete list of all accommodations call the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau at:
1-888-338-0976 or
Visit their website at:
www.snohomish.org

TOURS



There are no regularly scheduled estuary tours. Two companies cruise along the waterfront and occasionally enter the Snohomish River and sloughs. Everett Parks offers a paddle tour.

Canoe Trips with Everett Parks: During the summer months, the Everett Parks and Recreation Department offers guided canoe trips through the estuary. Trips begin in Marysville, and go north or south down the Ebey Slough. The trip takes six canoes. During high tide, paddlers can explore hard-to-get-to places on Spencer Island. The trip costs about \$18, canoe rental is included. For more information call Everett Parks at: (425) 257-8300.

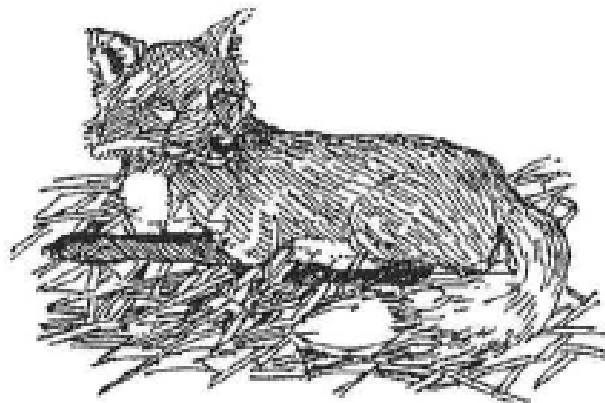
Mosquito Fleet: The Mosquito Fleet offered a guided tour of the estuary in a jet pontoon boat called, the "Heron". The company may resume this service if there is demand but now primarily offers whale watching cruises. The tour, called the Everett Everglades Tour, traveled around Jetty Island and then up the Snohomish River, exploring the sloughs around Spencer Island. For more information call: (425) 252-6800.

Captain Cook Cruises: The company offers a cruise on Port Gardner Bay and if weather is unfavorable, along the Snohomish River. The boat can be chartered for business meetings and parties. For more information call: (425) 259-5010

VIEWING WILDLIFE



The Snohomish River Estuary is many things to many different kinds of wildlife. For some it is an ideal, unhassled, year-round home. For others, the estuary is a safe travel corridor. For thousands of birds in particular, this oasis of marsh and slough is an important resting and feeding stop during their spring and fall migrations along the Pacific Flyway. At least 15 species of mammals regularly use the estuary as a home. And for many fish, the estuary's complex web of rivulets and creeks is an essential nursery system for the next generation of salmon and trout.



WILDLIFE VIEWING TIPS

The following are brief suggestions on how to improve your ability to see wildlife in the estuary or any natural area.

Tip #1. Do Your Homework

The first step towards encountering more wildlife is to learn more about them. Research the animal's habitat and what it eats. These simple actions will allow you to know where to look and what attracts wildlife.

Tip #2. Use Equipment

Because an animal's eyesight can be hundreds of times better than ours can, they often see us before we see them. To even the score, use binoculars, a tripod-mounted scope, or a zoom lens on your camera. Or buy a parabolic reflector and headphones to pick up faint sounds. At night, a red filter on the end of your flashlight will allow you to see the animals without greatly disturbing them.

Tip #3. Know When to Look

Seasons influence the type and abundance of animals seen. Most birds that visit the estuary migrate. As a result, the best time to see birds is during the summer. With our rainy winters, it may be difficult to view birds then. The following is a brief outline of how wildlife react to the seasons.

Spring: Migrating birds begin to return in waves. They are in full breeding plumage—singing and performing conspicuous displays in hopes of being noticed by a potential mate. This may be their most vocal and viewable time of the year. Hungry mammals are browsing on succulent buds, shoots, and grasses.

Summer: Late arriving migrating birds start nesting, taking advantage of the fuller leaf cover. In

late summer, some waterfowl shed their flight feathers and retreat to dense marshes where they can hide from predators. Young mammals are being risen and taught to fend for themselves. Summer is a good time to see family groups traveling together.

Fall: Many birds begin to migrate south as food gets scarce. Migrants group together before starting their journeys. Hibernators gorge themselves on the fall crop of nuts and berries, gaining fat that they will live on for the next several months.

Winter: Many birds have migrated south. A few birds, such as chickadees and waterfowl, remain here. The estuary is one of Washington's most important winter gathering and feeding grounds for waterfowl. Mammals, such as beaver and muskrat, are hibernating in their lodges. Some animals, like deer, continue to eat throughout the winter.

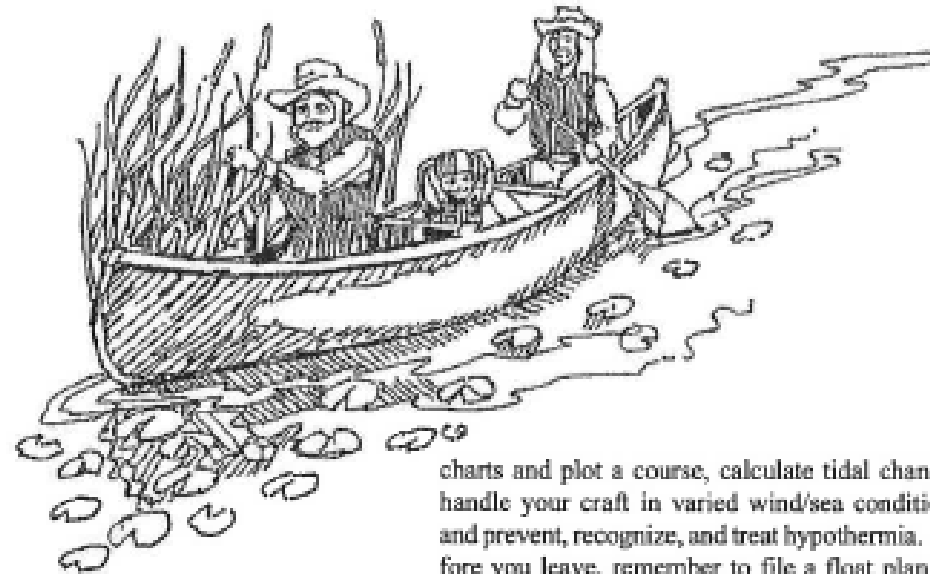
Tip #4. Time of Day

Time of day affects wildlife activity. Some animals rest during the day while and are active at night. Others are only active during the morning and evenings. Early and late in the day are the best times to look for wildlife in the summer; noon is typically a rest time. Activity usually peaks in the twilight hours, but night is also an active time. Many animals use the dark to shelter their activities from hungry predators. Nights with a full moon are great for seeing mammals that mainly come out only at night.

Tip #5. Wildlife Viewing Etiquette

Avoid stressing wildlife. Remain well back from their dens, nests, roosts, display areas and feeding areas. Tread lightly to keep disturbance of their habitat to a minimum.

CANOE AND KAYAKING



The Snohomish River Estuary is perhaps Washington's best place to paddle a canoe or kayak or row a crew shell. You can paddle more than 40 miles of sloughs, river channels, and port waterways escaping into a world of lush vegetation, scampering shore birds and the occasional soaring eagle.

The first and most important thing to keep in mind when on estuary waters is: **BE AWARE OF TIDAL INFLUENCE.** Sloughs such as Union and Deadwater virtually dry up during low tides. Tidal actions cause the waters to recede quickly and if you are not careful you will get stuck in the thick mud that covers the bed of the sloughs. Tidal currents can make the paddle up a slough extremely difficult or very easy depending on the flow of the tide.

TIPS

When packing for your paddle excursion, be sure to take tidal tables, maps, nautical charts, a compass and of course, wear a lifejacket. As a paddler, you should know how to read nautical

charts and plot a course, calculate tidal changes, handle your craft in varied wind/sea conditions, and prevent, recognize, and treat hypothermia. Before you leave, remember to file a float plan departure and expected arrival time and place, where you are going and with whom.

On your trip, stay on the inside corners to take advantage of easier currents and to avoid possible collision with motorboats. Do not canoe or kayak when the rivers and sloughs are in flood stage. Flooding water is unpredictable and dangerous, even for the expert kayaker.

TIMING

Correspond your trips with the tide's currents so you are heading up river or up a slough when the tide is coming in, and going down river and down a slough when the tide is going out. If not, you will spend more time strenuously paddling than enjoying the beautiful sights. Buy a tidal chart to help you schedule the best time to leave and return. You can determine which sloughs should be avoided in case of low tide. Try Captain Jack's Tide and Current Almanac. It has daily predictions of tide height and tide current at Everett and other cities located within Puget Sound.

LAUNCH SITES

Launch sites in the estuary are located a sufficient distance apart so you can launch at one site and disembark from another.

Everett Marine Park

This is the best boat launch facility in the area. It costs \$5 per motorized boat, there are 13 self-launch lanes, launch floats, paved parking lot, restrooms with hot water, a public fishing pier, guest moorage, free marine pump-out and a picnic park. A paddle boat-only launch ramp (free) is located at the southwest corner of the park. Hours are Nov - Mar. 6a.m. - 7p.m. / Apr - Oct. 4a.m. - 11p.m.

Directions: From I-5, take Exit 195 to Grand Avenue, which becomes East Marine Drive under I-5 as it heads northwest to loop around the north end of the Everett peninsula. It becomes West Marine Drive as it curves south and the cross street numbers begin to climb. At 10th Street turn right; the park is at street's end.

Ebey Slough Boat Launch, Marysville

This launch is a little difficult to find but it is the only place where you can enter a slough directly. There is no place to park next to the launch site and no restrooms. You must park down the road from the launch site.

Directions: From Everett, take the Marysville exit off I-5 to 4th Ave., and make the first right turn (Beach Street). Turn right on First Street. The primitive launch is 100 yards to the west directly under I-5, next to a lumber mill.

Rotary Park, Lowell-Snohomish River Road

It has a paved launch ramp and docks, temporary restrooms and garbage cans. Launch fee for motor boats is \$3.

Directions: Take I-5 south to Exit 192 and head south to Lenora Street, turn left and head for the river on what becomes Lowell River Road. At the edge of Lowell, there is a steep, rough access on the left bank of the river bend left of the road.

Langus Riverfront Park, Everett

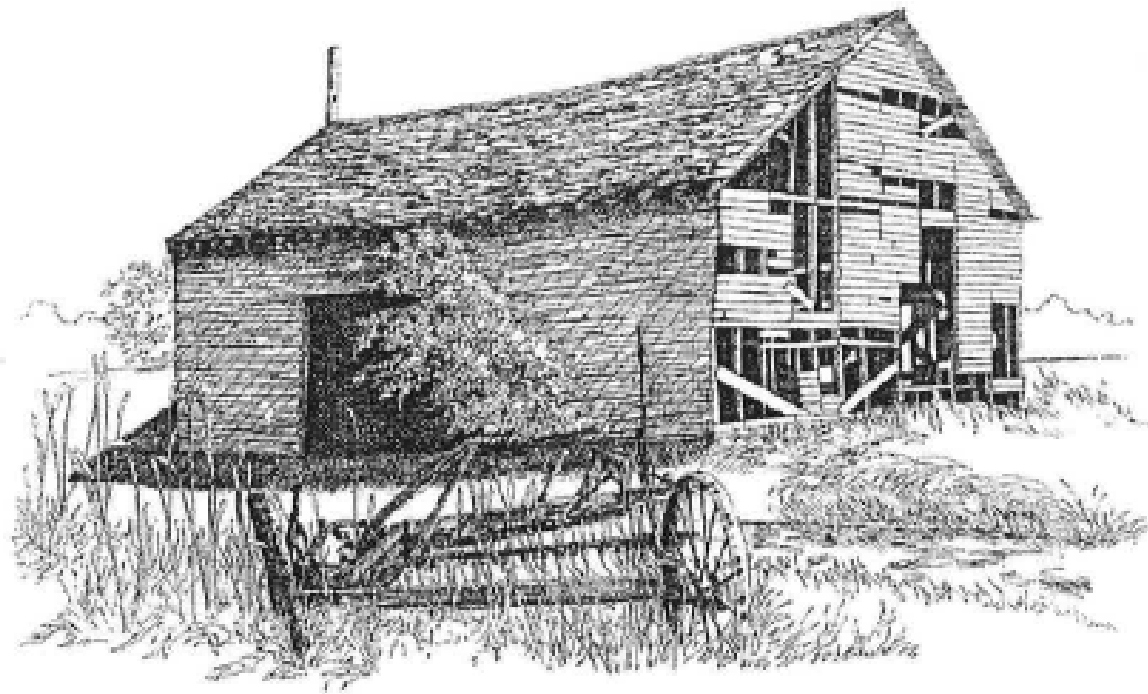
This is the second best equipped launch site and the only one located in the heart of the estuary. There are two paved launch lanes, picnic areas, floating docks, restrooms and parking for trailers. This is a great place to launch to explore Union or Steamboat slough. The launch fee is \$3 for motor boaters, no fee for paddle boats.

Cady Park, Snohomish

This launch has a concrete ramp, picnic areas, parking, temporary restrooms and no launch fee. Beginning at the boat launch, an asphalt trail follows the river and leads to Snohomish's historic section. At the end of the short trail there are public restrooms, and a visitor information center.

Directions: From I-5, take Highway 2 east, turn right (south) onto Highway 9, and exit east (left) into Snohomish on 2nd Street. Get on First Street (one block south) and follow it east through the historic section of Snohomish. Turn right on Maple, which goes to the river and launch site. Look for the signs.

EXPLORING THE ESTUARY



A description of some of the sights and activities that can be enjoyed during a visit to the Estuary.

EXPLORING THE ESTUARY EVERETT WATERFRONT

In Everett's early days, the waterfront bustled with activity from numerous sawmills and mine smelters. Today, lumber mills and fish processing plants fill most of the shoreline.

What to See

As you drive along the waterfront (on Marine View Drive), hundreds of floating logs are apparent in Port Gardner Bay. The Port of Everett is a major exporter of logs, most going to Japanese and other Far Eastern ports. At the northern tip of the Everett peninsula lies the abandoned Weyerhaeuser pulp mill. Weyerhaeuser once operated four mills here and was one of the companies that helped Everett grow. At the south end of the waterfront you will find Scott Paper Company, which came to Everett about 1950.

It is impossible to miss the waterfront's largest resident, the U.S. Naval Station Everett. It is home to the USS Abraham Lincoln, plus numerous support ships. The facility can house 2,393 personnel and is one of the largest naval stations in Washington. Unless the Navy is offering one of their many ship tours though, this facility is off limits to the public.

The Everett Marina is the largest in the Pacific Northwest, and second largest on the west coast. There are 2300 boats anchored here—800 people actually live on their boats.

What to Do

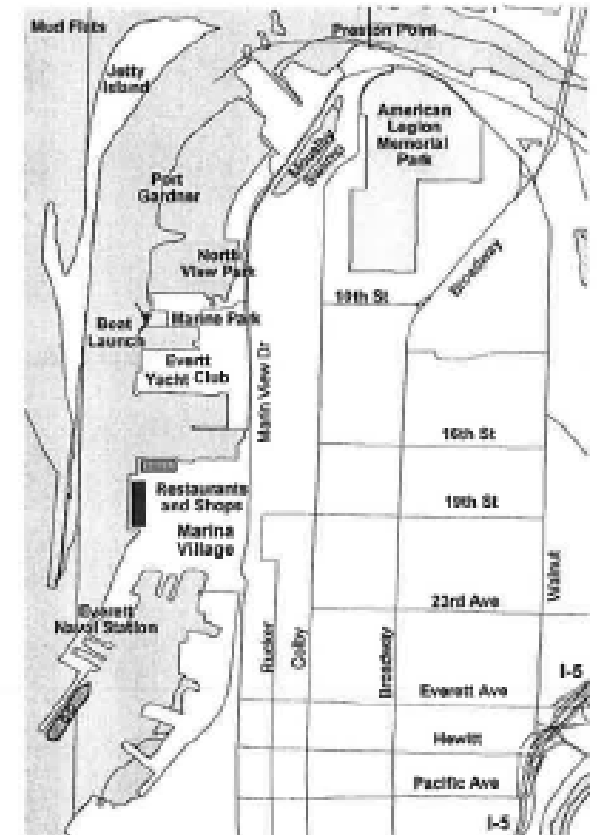
At the Everett Marine Park (down 10th Street) you can watch boats of all sizes go by or launch one of your own. Canoeists and kayakers have their own launch at the south end of the park. You can crab or fish off the dock, watch birds, fly a kite, or enjoy the views of sunsets and snow-covered mountains to the north and west.

Marina Village, just north of the Navy

Homeport, is popular among local residents as well as tourists. This is the only place within the estuary where you can eat at various indoor (and in summer outdoor) restaurants, shop for gifts, and even stay overnight. (see the lodging section for details)

Directions

From the south on Interstate 5, take the Hewitt Ave. exit and turn left (west) towards the water. From the north take the City Center (Everett Ave) exit and turn right. Go west across town to Marine View Drive, then turn north (right). Marine View Drive follows the waterfront.



JETTY ISLAND

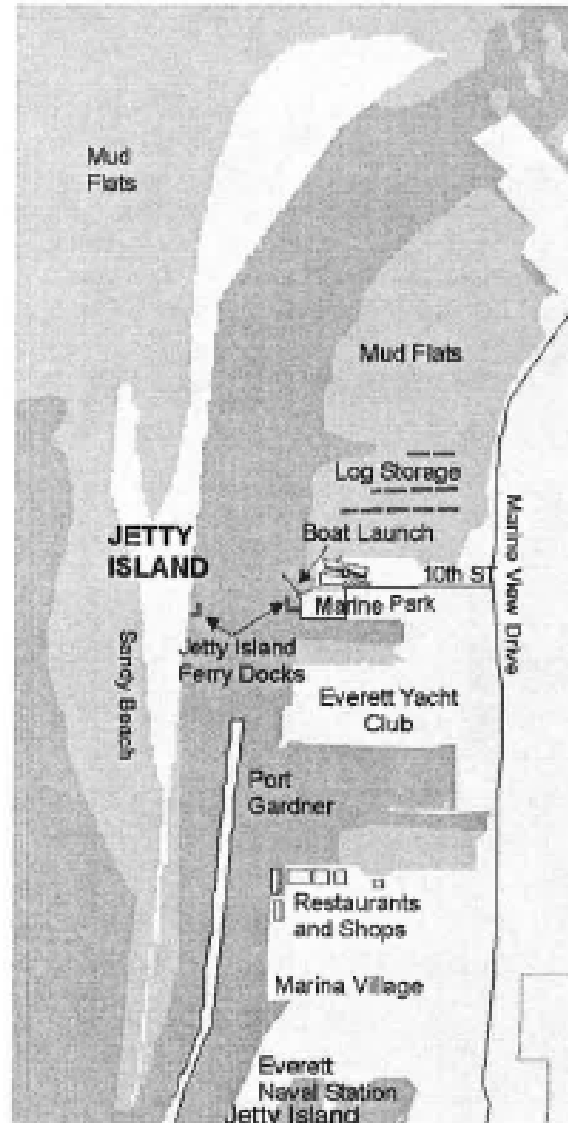
Jetty Island is a two-mile long island created in 1889 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers when they dredged Port Gardner Bay to enlarge the port. The man-made island is covered with tall grass and a few trees, and has the only sandy beach on the Everett waterfront on its west side. It is located west of the waterfront, only 500 feet from Everett Marine Park, and runs parallel to the coast. Camping and dogs are not allowed on the island; campfires are restricted.

What to See

Jetty Island is the southern most nesting area for the Arctic Tern in the United States, outside of Alaska. The Terns were once scared off the island by Army Reserve helicopter landing practices. The Pilchuck Audubon Society has worked to encourage nesting back on the Island.

Bald Eagles visit the island to eat flatfish when salmon runs are small in the surrounding rivers. Along the pilings north of the Island, you will find osprey and cormorants roosting and nesting. Other birds to see include Great Blue Herons, Caspian Terns, Brant, Canada Geese, mergansers and Wigeon. California sea lions enjoy the sandy beaches on the island's west side.

Eelgrass beds (rich underwater meadows) were at one time abundant along the Jetty Island and Port Gardner Bay shores. Over the years, log storage facilities, oil from ships and road run-off poisoned large portions of it; only patches remain. Eelgrass is excellent food for much aquatic life, including ducks, sea turtles and fish. The outer half of each grass blade is usually covered with a wide variety of tiny marine plants and animals. Herring, salmon, clams and Dungeness crab all depend on eelgrass for food or shelter.



What to Do

JETTY ISLAND DAYS July 7 - Sept 5

Every summer the Everett Parks and Recreation Department provide interpretive ranger services, free ferry transportation, activities and programs. Jetty hours are 10 am to 5:30 pm Wednesday through Saturday, and 11 am - 5:30 pm Sundays.

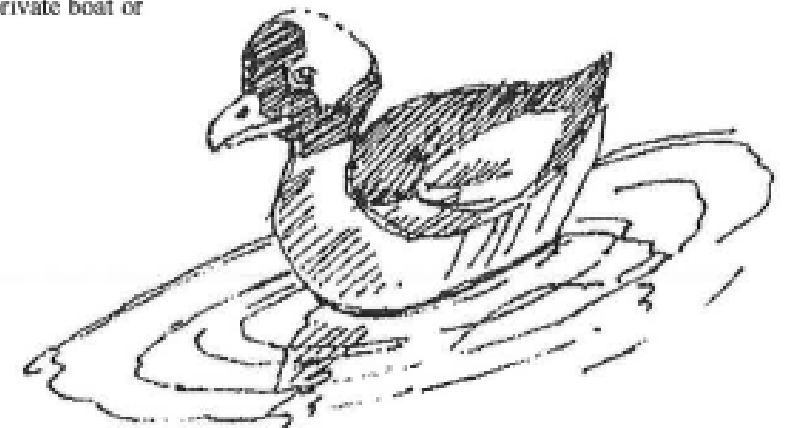
Bird watching is excellent on Jetty Island. Its sandy beaches, eelgrass beds and surrounding mudflats provide perfect places to view wildlife. Bring your bird book.

Fishing is another way to experience the island. Possible catches include cutthroat trout, dolly varden or bull trout, sturgeon and of course, salmon. Fishermen have been known to use flies with success.

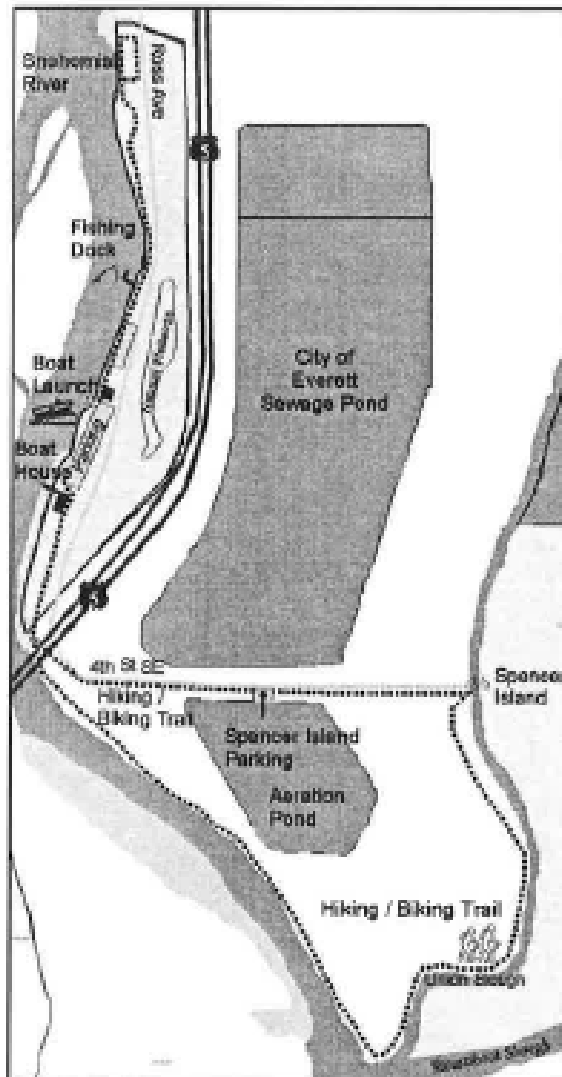
Directions

The ferry during Jetty Island Days leaves from the 10th Street boat launch at Everett Marine Park every half hour.

This is a very popular, first-come, first-served operation; waiting in line for an hour or more is typical. Groups of 12 or more are advised to make a reservation. Call (425) 257-8304 during the season for more information. You can also reach the island by private boat or kayak.



LANGUS RIVERFRONT PARK



This 96-acre park, located at the northern edge of Everett on Smith Island, is the gateway to the estuary. It was named after William J. Langus, a long-term council member and strong supporter of parks. The area was once home to the Snohomish Indian Tribe. The river's banks have also been home to traders, trappers and timber mills.

What to See

Harbor seals occasionally pop up as they move up or down the Snohomish River. Birds include various gulls, Canada Geese, ducks, Belted Kingfishers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Western Grebes, wrens, Great Blue Herons and a variety of song and forest birds. Bald Eagles, Osprey and Red-tailed Hawks also visit the area.

What to Do

You can launch any kind of boat from this park's launch ramp to fish or explore upstream or down along the Snohomish River. The pier over the Snohomish River provides a comfortable spot for fishing.

Langus park provides an 2.8 mile, paved, river-front trail that begins at the boat launch and follows the Snohomish River south to the point where the river converges with Union Slough. The trail continues north and follows Union Slough to the Spencer Island entrance. You can either walk to Spencer Island or follow a gravel road back to Langus Park. The trail is very scenic and allows one to view the relatively unaltered Union Slough by land, rather than kayak. It also has covered and open picnic areas and benches along the route.

Bird watching is possible as you walk along the banks of the tranquil Union Slough. A place to view congregations of hundreds of birds is at Everett's waste water treatment plants. They are located just east of Langus Park, on either side of the gravel road which leads to Spencer Island. The

ponds are quite visible from Interstate 5.

Langus Park's central location makes it a great place to begin a paddle trip around the east part of the estuary. Union Slough is calm and scenic, passing through some untouched wetlands and many native plants and wildlife can be seen. Powerboats do not often venture down the slough because of the deadheads (semi submerged logs) and shallow water. Be careful though—Union Slough is strongly influenced by the tide. Plan your trip to take advantage of the tidal flows.

The dikes along Union Slough are neither extremely high nor rocky, so you can get out of your boat, stretch your legs, and check out the surroundings. One nice place to disembark is along Spencer Island. Just south of the entrance bridge, there is a gradual, soft slope with steps to climb the dike, and further south a small, shallow lagoon that is another good place to dock or even launch. At either place, you can leave your kayak to walk along the interpretive trails.

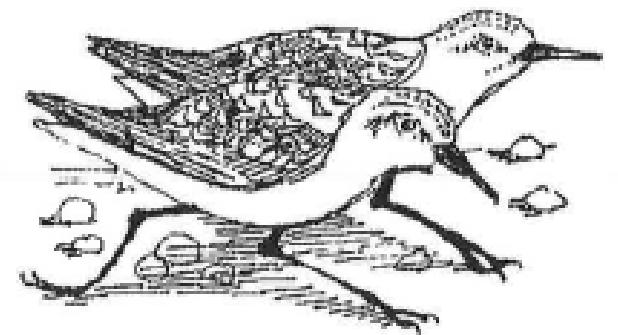
You can also follow Union Slough to the Base Cut, between North Spencer and Mid-Spencer Island, and float through the cut to Steamboat Slough. Steamboat and Ebey Sloughs are large and not as affected by the tides as the smaller sloughs—they will not dry out during low tides like smaller sloughs. Or you can float through the cut and around Otter Island by way of Ebey Slough. The east side of the estuary is comparatively well preserved and offers some of the best opportunities to view native wetland plants and animals.

Directions

From I-5 at Everett, take Exit 195 (Marine View Drive). Turn left off the exit ramp onto East Marine View Drive to 529 North (Pacific Highway). From 529 North, take the first exit on your right (Smith Island Access/Frontage Road) after crossing the Snohomish River and follow signs to

Langus Riverfront Park.

From I-5 at Marysville, take Exit 198 (North Broadway in Marysville) onto 529 South (Pacific Highway). Exit onto Smith Island Access/Frontage Road, and follow signs to Langus Riverfront Park.



SPENCER ISLAND

Bordered by Steamboat and Union Sloughs, Spencer Island sits like a crown jewel in the estuary's center. It is essentially a 412 acre grassy marsh, ringed by trees, and networked with sloughs and man-made channels. The island is co-owned by Snohomish County Parks and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Snohomish County owns the south half of the island, while WDFW owns the north half. The property line is approximately 1,400 feet north of the bridge.

The island is surrounded by a dike built of earth and wood waste. The barn at the parks entrance has served many generations of farmers. John Spencer, the island's namesake, farmed here in the 1920's. Legend has it that Tom Mormon, another farmer, rolled the barn on log skids across the island to its present location.

What to See

Birds galore, including Marsh Wrens, Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Canada Geese and numerous species of ducks. There are more Wood Ducks thanks to the placement of nest boxes by conservation groups, like the Snohomish Wetlands Alliance. Bat boxes have also been placed on an abandoned barn to increase their numbers. A heron rookery exists somewhere nearby. Sandhill Cranes have been reported on rare occasions. Black-tailed Deer, Florida Cottontail Rabbits, Muskrats and River Otters are also possibilities.

What to Do

Spencer Island provides the best place for hiking within the estuary. You can make a long or short loop walking or jogging on the three and a half miles of mulched trails built on top of the dikes that ring the island. Interpretive signs help you understand the history and the land you are on. Wildlife viewing platforms also let you cross the wetlands and view birds close-up. Indeed,

Spencer Island is possibly the best birding spot in Puget Sound. The trails, open water wetlands and observation platforms combine to make this a very accessible place for wildlife viewing.

The island is connected to Everett's Langus Park (via an old jackknife railroad bridge), which has recreational trails that follow the Snohomish River.

Spencer Island is historically a popular site for hunting. Duck and goose hunting (with dogs) is allowed on the northern half, owned by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Dogs are allowed for hunting on the north portion of the island. They are not allowed on the southern portion, which is owned by Snohomish County Parks property.

Several dikes bisect this island, creating open waterways for exploring by canoe or kayak.

Directions

From the South:

From I-5 at Everett, take Exit 195 (Marine View Drive). Turn left off the exit ramp onto East Marine View Drive to 529 North (Pacific Highway). From 529 North, take the first exit on your right (Smith Island Access/Frontage Road) after crossing the Snohomish River and follow signs to Langus Riverfront Park.

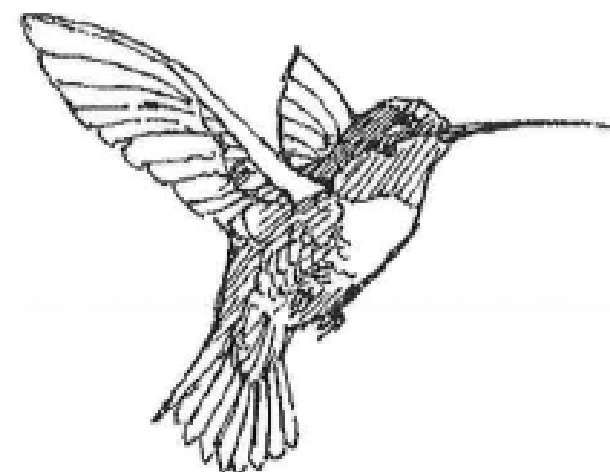
From the North:

From I-5 at Marysville, take Exit 198 Broadway in Marysville) onto 529 South (Pacific Highway). Exit onto Smith Island Access/Frontage Road, and follow signs to

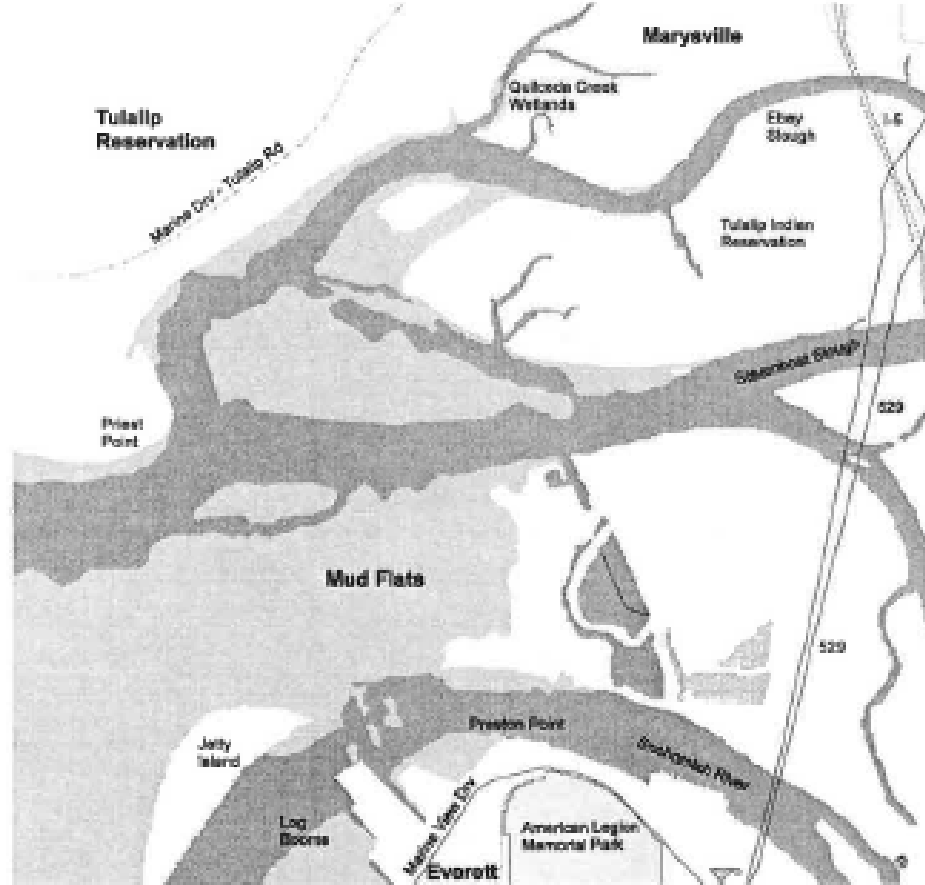
Langus Riverfront Park:

Pedestrian Access from the Trailhead:
Walk or bike approximately 1.0 miles along the paved Langus Riverfront Trail to the Spencer island Bridge.

Note: Parking is provided about 500 feet west of the park entrance. You can also park at the City of Everett's Langus Riverfront Park.



PORT GARDNER BAY MUDFLATS



The Port Gardner mudflats lie at the Snohomish River's mouth. They are continually forming, as the river—carrying a load of fine soil particles—is finally able to release its cargo when its banks widen and its speed slows upon meeting the ocean. The first inhabitants of the area probably settled at the mouth of the Snohomish River.

North of the river's mouth is North Ebey Island, south is Smith Island. Brackish marsh (containing some saltwater) dominates both shorelines with grasses and sedges. Freshwater marshes are found at slightly higher elevations inland.

What to See

The impressive intertidal mudflats, created by sediments deposited by the sloughs, provide a shallow water paradise for wildlife. This place is home and food for millions of barely visible bugs and other critters, which in turn are food for salmon, flat fish and other marine fish. The varied habitat of this area also provides food, shelter and nesting for 25,000 to 35,000 waterfowl and wading birds. Other animals live in the Sitka Spruce swamp of Ebey and Smith islands.

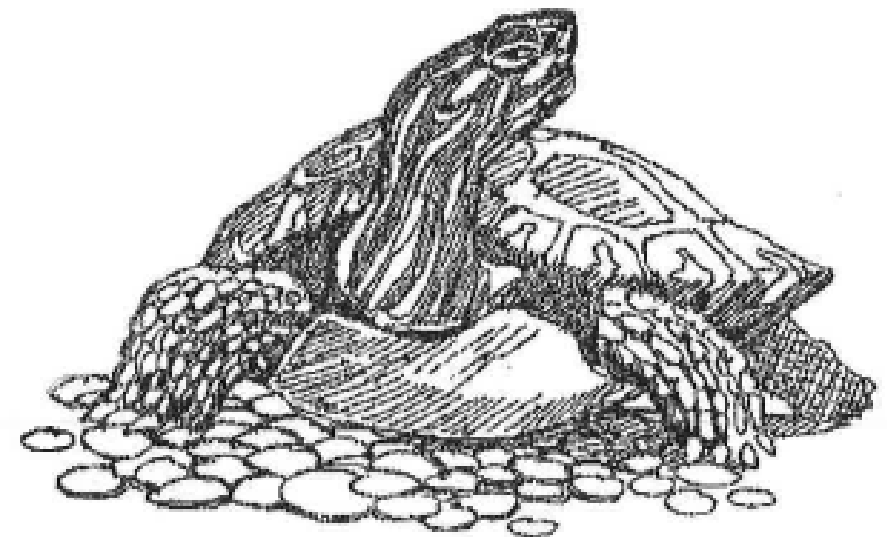
What to Do

Bird watching is fantastic, as is paddling around via canoe or kayak to enjoy the sights and sounds. Osprey, nesting from May to October on the pilings, are numerous. Black-tailed Deer can be seen in the marshes where they eat and rest. They have been known to wade into the water to eat aquatic plants, even putting their heads under water. River Otters regularly visit the mudflat edges.

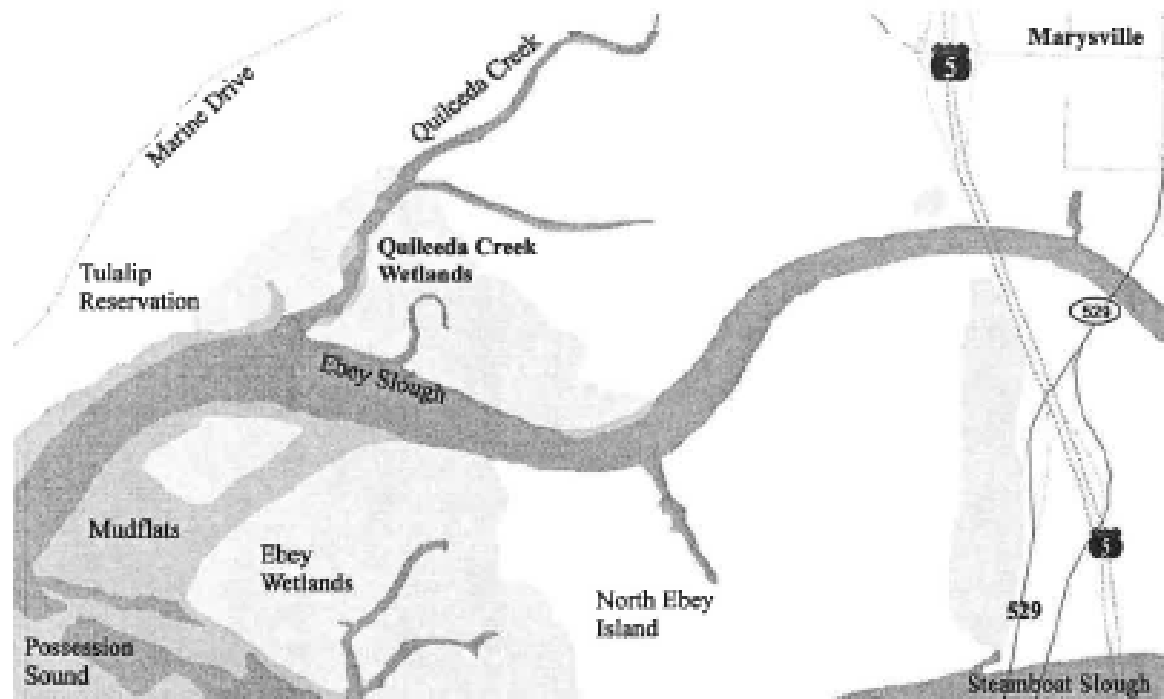
The west end of Smith Island is one of the most popular duck hunting spots in the estuary. Hunters anchor boats to the pilings and walk the dikes behind the shoreline.

Directions

The only access to the mudflats and the western shore of North Ebey and Smith islands is by boat. There are no public docking sites.



QUILCEDA CREEK WETLANDS



This 395 acre wetland, west of Interstate 5 and the City of Marysville, contains the only major habitat transition of its kind in the estuary. Here, a brackish marsh (treeless wetland) transitions into a brackish swamp (treed wetland). The brackish swamp (some saltwater) changes into a freshwater marsh, which finally transitions into uplands (dry ground). Bulrush and cattail are the main plants in the fresh marsh. Sitka spruce trees lord over the swamp. An unusual stand of juniper is also found within this area.

Quilceda Creek also has much archeological and cultural significance to the Tulalip Tribe, whose current day reservation is just north of here. This was the home of their ancestors; some of their original settlements were located here.

What to See

The various landforms and plants provide a wonderful and abundant variety of food and shelter for many birds, fish and mammals, including Black-tailed Deer, Raccoon and small rodents. Numerous wildlife and waterfowl congregate at the creek's mouth and along Ebey Slough, including ducks, geese and osprey, which nest here.

A state sensitive plant, the black lily, is also found here. The Washington Natural Heritage Program has identified these wetlands as a special habitat because juvenile salmon depend on it for food, shelter and safety from predators. Spawning adult salmon and juvenile salmon moving up and down Quilceda Creek are important to local tribes as food and culturally, as a connection to spirit.

What to Do

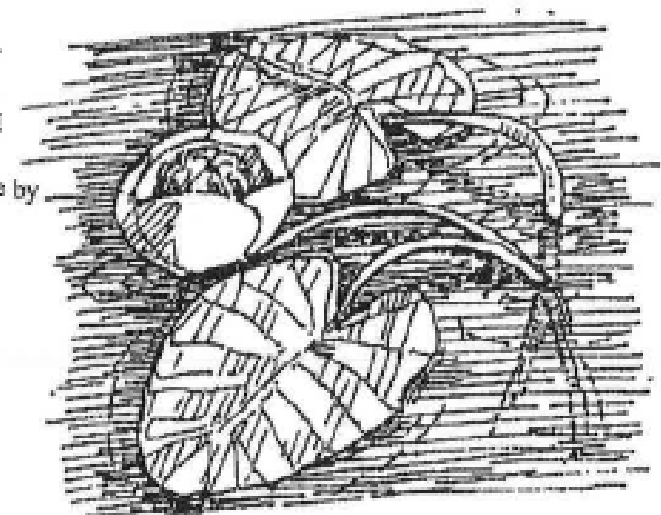
This delta area is an extremely important rest stop for migrating birds. It boasts the third largest concentration of wintering wildfowl in Western Washington—after Skagit flats, and Bowerman Basin (in Gray's Harbor near Hoquiam). Bird watching in the spring and fall can be quite rewarding. The numerous drainage channels and Quilceda Creek itself are wonderful to explore by canoe or kayak. In addition, it's a great way to watch the birds and wildlife.

Hunting is excellent here as the wetlands and saltwater marshes appeal to many migrating ducks and geese.

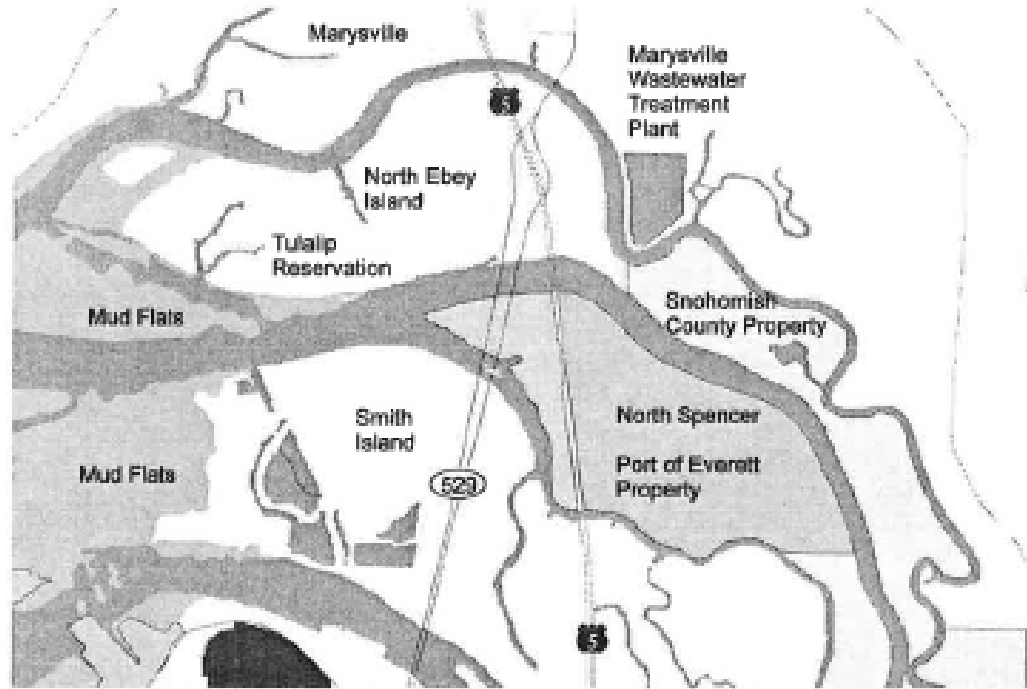
You can paddle to the Quilceda wetlands by launching from Marysville. (See the paddle boat launch sites section) Coordinate your launch with the tides so you can easily float down Ebey Slough, pass Marysville, to the Quilceda Creek Wetlands. A high tide will allow one to enter Quilceda Creek and enjoy the array of wetland vegetation along the shores and the Sitka Spruce forests. A trip from this launch to Everett Marine Park (or vice versa) is not too strenuous and very scenic.

Directions

This wetland, west of I-5 and the City of Marysville, is bisected by Quilceda Creek. It is bounded by 14th Ave NE and 19th Ave NE to the west, Ebey Slough to the south, and Tulalip Road to the north. Access is possible by boat. Follow Ebey Slough to the mouth of Quilceda Creek and then paddle upstream.



NORTH EBEBY ISLAND



North Ebey Island is immediately east of I-5, just south of Marysville. It is mostly marsh, filled with cattails, rushes, sedges and some trees. The original wetlands, which encompassed 20,000 acres, were diked starting in 1875—before the City of Everett formed. Its interior has reverted back to wetland (about 2,000 acres), since the dikes were breached in 1950 and 1963.

The railroad bridge crossing North Ebey Slough was built about 1910. It is a round table design that pivots 90 degrees to let tall boats through.

What to See

The breached dikes, with their resulting flooding, provide feeding and resting areas for many ducks, geese, wading birds, hawks, songbirds, plus an occasional Bald Eagle or Peregrine Falcon. The surrounding farmland also contains valuable food for all kinds of birds. The dikes are particularly

Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Guide

accessible to muskrats, which dig holes in them, beginning the breaching process. Other mammals living here include Black-tailed Deer and Beaver.

Ebey Slough's small tributaries that line the coast provide critical habitat for salmon, particularly Coho salmon, which spend up to a year in these safe nursery tributaries.

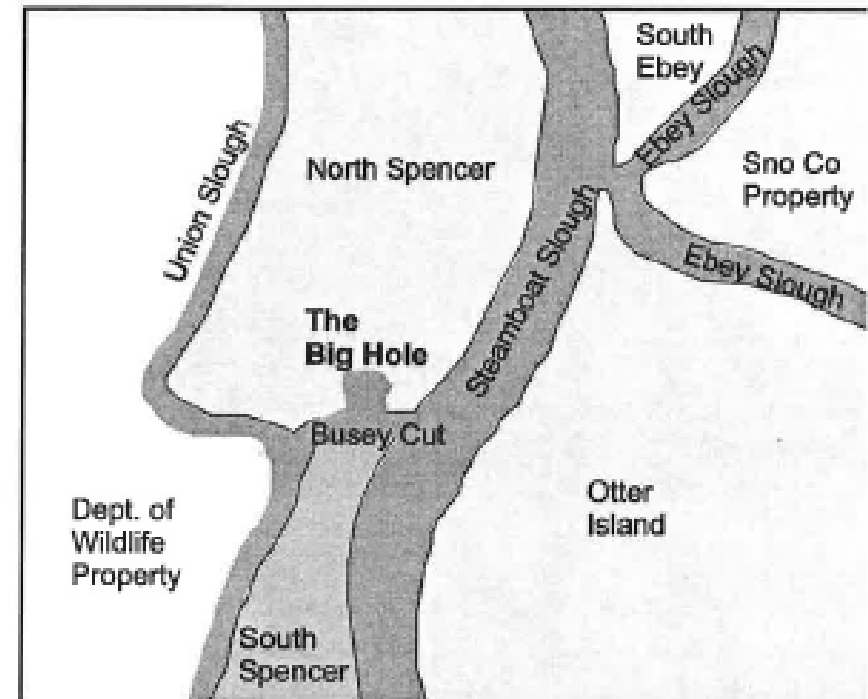
What to Do

Try bird and mammal watching by canoe, kayak or boat. Or even fish watching. Duck hunting is best in open water between the two sloughs, and in the wetland via the breached dikes. Flyfish for cutthroat trout and steelhead in the Ebey and Steamboat Sloughs.

Directions

Watercrafts are the only way to reach North Ebey Island.

THE BIG HOLE



The Big Hole, also called the Big Pond or Big Swamp is just that—100 acres of wetland smack in the center of Spencer Island. It's a freshwater marsh, filled with cattail and bulrush. Trees and wild roses grow on the surrounding dikes. On the east side of the pond is a broken dike, evidence of an illegal dredging operation from the 50's by a mill looking for a short cut to float logs to its city. Numerous attempts were made to repair the dike but it constantly gave way.

What to See

The best views of the Big Hole can be seen as you enter Union Slough. The wetland provides food and homes for Bald Eagles, ducks, Great Blue Herons, and other wading birds. The treed swamps provide habitat for Wood Ducks, Red-

tail Hawks, songbirds, Black-tailed Deer, Muskrat, and Beaver.

What to Do

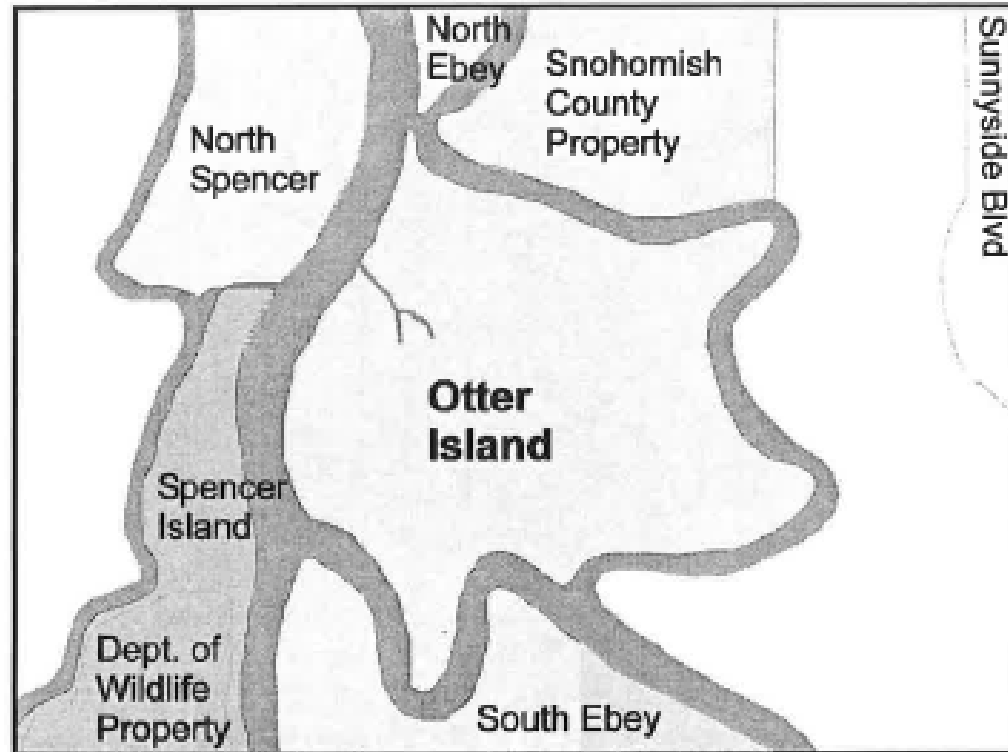
This is an excellent area for bird watching and fishing. The Big Hole is also a very popular place for duck hunting, primarily because of the slowness in which the tides recede here. This allows the hunter to hunt longer since the water leaves here last.

Directions

Access is possible only by kayak, canoe or small boat.

Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Guide

OTTER ISLAND



At only 164 acres, Otter Island is the most pristine land in the estuary. It was spared any development or cutting due to the knee deep water found throughout the island. It is located between Ebey and Steamboat Sloughs. A forested wetland or swamp covers about half the island's west side; a marshy wetland claims the island's core.

What to See

Otter Island is perhaps the best example of how the Snohomish River estuary looked before diking and farming changed it. It was the first parcel purchased by Snohomish County for its wetland preservation program. Bald Eagles, Red-tailed hawks and Osprey nest here.

What to Do

Bird watch for hawks, eagles and other birds of prey. Kayak or canoe around this scenic island. Fish for cutthroat trout, steelhead and bass. The water here is mostly fresh, even though there is some tidal influence.

Directions

Because of the pristine condition of the island, access on the island is prohibited. But you are welcome to paddle around the island and enjoy the sights from the water.

CENTRAL EBEEY ISLAND

Between the Highway 2 trestle and Otter Island is Central Ebey Island. This area provides a unique example of how people and wildlife can coexist. The northern portion has tree lined dikes that provide great benefits for wildlife. The isolated stands of freshwater marsh and scattered stands of conifers provide additional habitat.

What to See

Portions of the area continue to be farmed and still provide habitat for coyotes, hawks, woodpeckers and songbirds.

What to Do

The north portion of Central Ebey Island is a great place to appreciate wildlife. Get there by taking the Ebey Exit off Highway 2. Immediately after you exit the trestle, take the road that heads east. It loops north and heads under the trestle, becoming Riverside Road. Follow it through a residential area to 12th Street. When 12th Street turns north, it becomes 163rd. Drive down 163rd, past Ebey Island Tree Farm. On the east side of this street there are ponds that usually host waterfowl. The street ends at a gate. There is no trespassing off the public road.

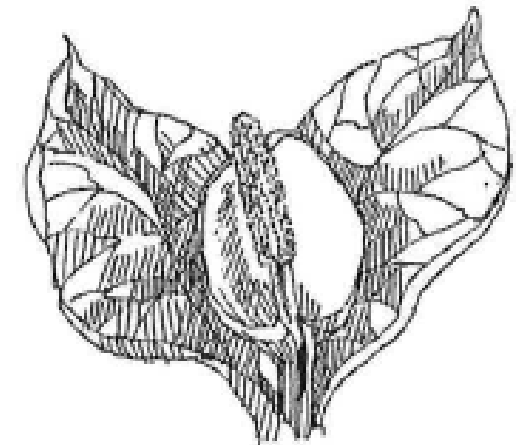
A drive east of Central Ebey Island, along Sunnyside Boulevard, allows you to view birds



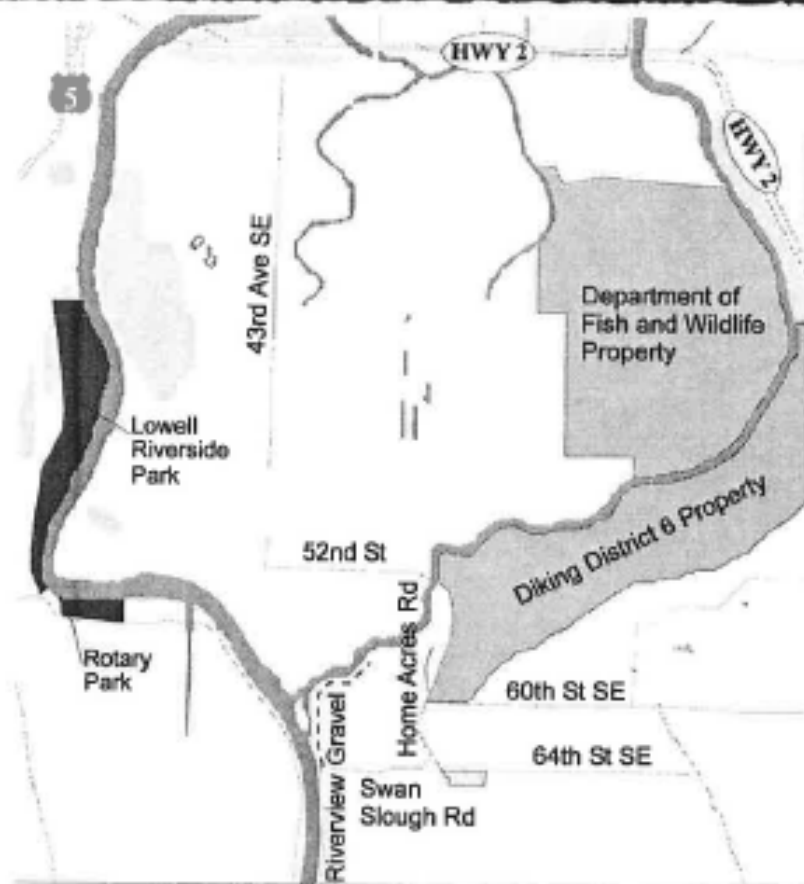
congregating on the Ebey Island flats. To get there, take Highway 2, then Highway 204 (a wide left turn) and at your first opportunity, turn left onto Sunnyside Blvd. As you drive north towards Marysville, the road rises and provides a beautiful panoramic view of the estuary, Everett, and on a clear day, the Olympic Mountains.

Directions

Take the 43rd Avenue exit off of the Highway 2 trestle. Take the first left, onto the road that loops under the trestle.



SOUTH EBEBY ISLAND



South Ebey Island is the area south of Highway 2. The area consists of expansive flat lands that have been extensively diked and drained. As a result, not much remains of the natural wetland habitat. It is now primarily farm land.

What to See

South Ebey Island fields flood during winter and early spring. These temporary lagoons host a variety of insects and plants that attract many species of water birds. Thousands of migratory birds flock to these ponds to rest during their journey.

What to Do

This area is good for birdwatching during the migratory seasons. Because of its expansiveness, you will probably want to use your car to get around from site to site. Backroads cross the flat lands and get you close to the ponds. Drive slowly and keep your distance from the birds. This improves your viewing opportunities and allows the birds to peacefully continue their activities.

The first place to visit on South Ebey while car bird watching is 43rd Avenue, just off of the Highway 2 trestle. On either side of the road are small lagoons that are usually alive with

waterfowl. Further south down Forty-Third Ave, which becomes Homeacres Road, are more great birding areas. Follow Homeacres Road and take a right on Swan Slough Rd, which ends in a T. If you take a right (north) you will drive down a gravel road that leads to the point where Ebey Slough converges with the Snohomish River. This forested, secluded area is a sanctuary for a few birds. If you take a left (south) you will be on Riverview Rd, which follows the Snohomish River. As you drive down this road, notice the quaint farmhouses and remains of old docks and pilings that line the shore.

On the west side of the Snohomish River, on 41st Street is Lowell Riverside Park. It has a nice asphalt path that follows the Snohomish River for about a mile. From the path, you can see the historic buildings of Lowell and across the river there is good wildlife habitat.

Just south of Lowell Riverside park, virtually an extension of the park, is Rotary Park. This is the best spot to launch a canoe or kayak if you want to explore the Snohomish River or Ebey Slough. The water in this area is less affected by the tides, but you must contend with strong river currents. North of the launch site, along the west side of the Snohomish River, is Everett's most historic industrial area—the birthplace of Lowell and Everett. The lumber mills that once flourished along this stretch have virtually disappeared.

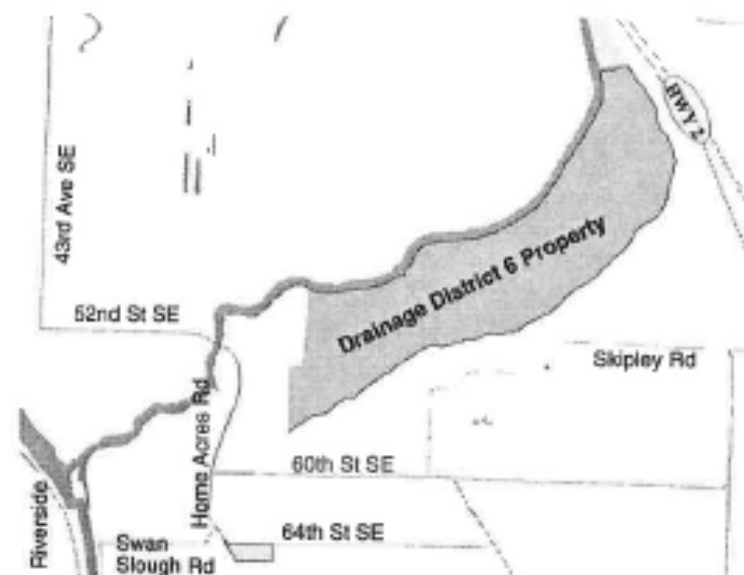
South of the launch, the river's east side is fairly rural. Less than half a mile south you will find an agricultural runoff control gate. Farmers have carved numerous canals to drain the land for their cattle and crops. The canals eventually converge and their run into the river is controlled, at this location, by a small dam. In front of the dam, where the nutrient-rich water runs into the river, cormorants, ducks and hawks converge.

It is a short and easy float from Rotary Park to Langus Park. The quick current will carry you

past the busy river shores. A longer but adventurous float is a paddle down the Snohomish River to the tip of North Smith Island or to Priest Point. At either one of these locations one should wait for the incoming tide for the return trip. Once the tide begins to rise, catch the incoming current up Ebey Slough. Going back up Ebey Slough, to Rotary Park will make a complete circumnavigation of the estuary.



DRAINAGE DISTRICT 6 and SOUTH SNOHOMISH RIVER



Drainage District 6 is a 453 acre strip of wetland that borders Ebey Slough. It is owned and managed by Snohomish County's Public Works Department. It was purchased as a wetland restoration project and to enhance flood control. It is one of the best examples of wetland preservation in the estuary.

Currently, there are no formal public access points to the Drainage District 6 property. Public Works intends on improving access by constructing trails along the dike, building a wetland interpretive center and providing a launch for paddle powered watercrafts.

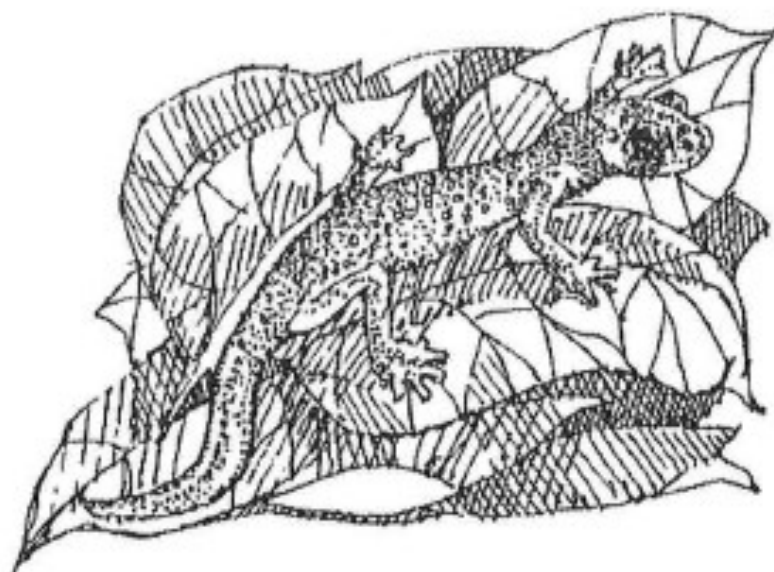
What to Do

No formal trails are available at Drainage District 6. South of the area, about 4 miles downstream on the Snohomish River, lies the town of Snohomish. This is a very historic town, known for its antique malls and well-preserved architecture. For historical buffs, there is Blackman's museum, on Avenue B, created in one of Snohomish's oldest houses (built in 1878).

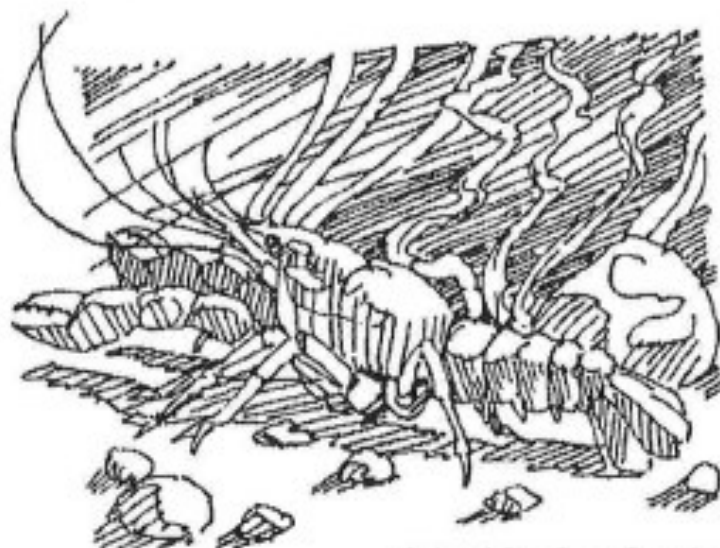
Along the Snohomish River, in the historic portion of town, is Cady Park. Cady Park is a perfect spot to start a paddle trip through the estuary. Typical trips include a float to Rotary Park in Lowell, or a 10 mile, 3-hour paddle to Langus Park in Everett. Floating down the Snohomish River from Cady Park in Snohomish is scenic and the river's current carries you along effortlessly. Along the shores you will see pilings left from the time when the river was a main transportation route for raw timber. Along with wildlife, you will float by some beautiful farmland, the tips of old barns and colorful houses are visible from river level.

Other paddle routes from Cady Park might be a float all the way to the mouth of the Snohomish River and on to Everett Marine Park or a detour down Ebey Slough to the Marysville boat launch. There is a flood gate on Ebey Slough just east of the Snohomish River, Ebey Slough fork. Make sure it is open before you set off.

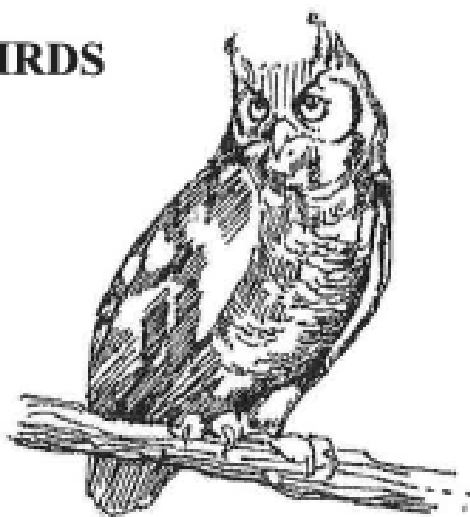
PLANTS AND WILDLIFE



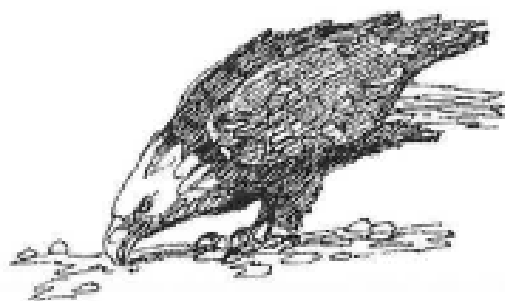
A description of some of the many plants and animals that you might encounter at the estuary.



BIRDS



The most visible and exciting animals in the estuary are the winged ones. The high productivity of estuaries provides a level of food and shelter not found in many other parts of the state, attracting common and exotic birds alike. The Snohomish River Estuary is also significant to the millions of birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway from Alaska to Antarctica; they depend on and stop at estuaries like this one to rest and refuel. How lucky for us that these essential pit stops are unbeatable places to watch wildlife. *Note: Review the bird list at the back of this guide.* Here are descriptions of some of the most sighted birds.



Bald Eagle

Its white head and tail, and huge yellow bill easily identify an adult Bald Eagle. This bird is

three feet tall and its wings measure six feet from tip to tip. It is most often seen near rivers, lakes and along the coast, where it perches in tall trees to search for dead or dying salmon, small mammals, ducks and carrion (dead meat). Immature eagles often "pirate" fish from other birds. It makes a huge, six-foot wide nest in the crotch of tall trees or rocky cliffs.



Belted Kingfisher

This is the only kingfisher in the U.S. It is a stocky bird (about one foot tall), with a large head and bill. Both sexes have a slate blue breast band across their white bellies. Look for kingfishers near woodland streams and ponds and the coast, where they hover over water or watch from low perches, then plunge headfirst to catch a fish. Other meals include frogs, snakes, insects, young birds and mice. Its call is a loud, dry rattle. Both parents help dig a burrow into a riverbank, usually three to six feet deep.

Canada Goose

The Canada Goose is our most common goose, with a distinctive black head and white

chin strap stretching from ear to ear. It nests in marshes, meadows and small islands, eating mostly grasses, sedges, grains, bulbs, berries and insects. Flocks of them usually migrate in V formation, stopping to eat in wetlands, meadows or cultivated fields, on their way south for the winter. The call is a deep, musical 'honk-a-honk'.

Double Crested Cormorant

This bird gets its name from the two tufts of white feathers curving back from behind its eyes that form a double crest. Except for its large orange throat pouch, it is blackish brown in color. This cormorant lives on rocky coasts, beaches, inland lakes and rivers and has a complex courtship dance. It eats mainly schooling fish, which it dives for. Its kinked neck is distinctive in flight, with eyes adapted for aerial as well as underwater vision.



Great Blue Heron

A large gray-blue heron, about four feet tall, stick thin, with a long yellow bill. It has a black stripe above its eye and streaks down its white foreneck. The adult, during mating season, also sports ornate plumes on its head, neck and back. The great blue can be found anywhere near water,

BIRDS

standing still patiently, waiting for a little fish to cross its path. This heron nests in colonies with other herons, usually high up in trees, and flies as far as South America to spend the winter.

Mallard Duck

The mallard is a dabbling duck, meaning it eats by tipping tail-up so its head can reach aquatic plants, seeds and snails in shallow lakes, ponds and flooded fields. This also means it does not need a running start to take off, but springs directly into flight. The male is quite noticeable with his metallic green feathered head and neck, yellow bill and chestnut breast. The female is mottled brown to camouflage her while nesting. Made of reeds and grasses, the nest is lined with down feathers, and concealed by surrounding vegetation.

Northern Flicker

This foot-long bird has a brown barred back, spotted under-parts, and a black crescent bib. Its white rump patch is conspicuous in flight. Males have a red or black mustache stripe. It is common in open woods and suburban areas, often seen on the ground, eating ants plus some nuts and seeds. This bird is typically the culprit making all the racket on metal siding, rain gutters and other noisy materials at daybreak in the spring. This drumming is part of the male's courtship routine to attract a mate. It usually nests in a tree cavity or bank burrow already dug.

Osprey

The Osprey is often called the fish hawk because it hovers over water searching for fish, then dives towards it, plunging feet first into the water to snatch it. Its color is dark brown above and white below, with a white head and prominent dark eye stripe. Its bulky stick nest—built in trees, on sheds, poles or docks, as close to water as it can get—is returned to and added on to, year after year.

FISH

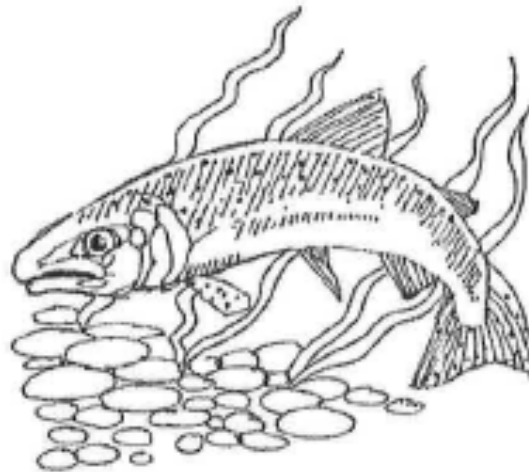


Red-tailed Hawk

This is our most common broad-winged hawk, with, of course, a rusty red tail. Otherwise, this hawk's coloration varies greatly, including a darkly streaked belly band that is not always there. It lives in woods with nearby open land, and eats mice, rabbits voles, crayfish and fish. The nest is usually made in the crotch of a large tree with a commanding view. Females often return to the area they nested in the year before.

Song Sparrow

A small bird with streaked coloration, a white belly and streaks on its side and breast that often meet in a central spot. Its tail is long, rounded, and pumped in flight. This sparrow's song is typically three or four clear notes followed by a buzzy 'tow-wee', then a trill. It is found in brushy areas, especially in dense streamside thickets. It eats grass and flower seeds, and some berries. The nest is beneath a tuft of grass, a bush or a brush pile, made of grasses, strips of bark, leaves



The estuary provides ideal habitat for a variety of fish. Fish find refuge among the shallow meandering channels of salt marshes, cat-tail wetlands and Sitka Spruce swamps. Anglers can catch chum salmon, starry flounder, pink salmon, peamouth chub, coho salmon, sculpins, sticklebacks and perch. Like any fishing area, certain locations are better than others. The following lists a few areas where certain species have been prevalent.

Chum Salmon

Chum are the most frequently caught salmon in the estuary. Catches have been the best near Spencer Marsh, on Mid-Spencer Island. Or Railroad Marsh (an extensive marsh situated on Steamboat Slough at the upper end of the estuary) later in the migration season. Runs peak in late April and again in late May.

Coho Salmon

Coho do not gather in certain areas in the estuary like the Chum. Catches have been good in the main channels and around Ebey Marsh, at the southern tip of North Ebey Island. Runs peak in mid to late May and in early July.

Chinook Salmon

This salmon is rare in the estuary. Catches have been recorded in Ebey Slough, Union Slough, and along the Union Slough Marsh during July. This species was listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act in March, 1999.

Pink Salmon

In Puget Sound, pink salmon migrate from the rivers in even years and return in odd years in most instances. Catches are good in Ebey Slough.

Cutthroat Trout

Cutthroat are not common in the estuary. They have been infrequently caught in the lower Steamboat Marsh and at Union Slough Marsh. Both sites are close to Puget Sound. Catches have been recorded from May to October.

Steelhead Trout

These trout are also found in good quantities in the estuary. Catches are good from late April to August; May is the best month.

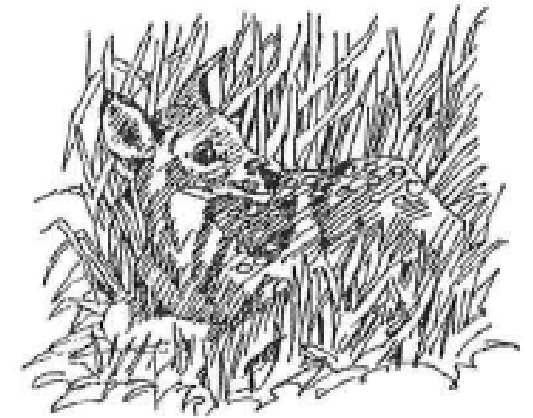
Starry Flounder

This fish is abundant in the estuary. Catches are high from late May to August. Starry flounder are caught throughout the estuary.

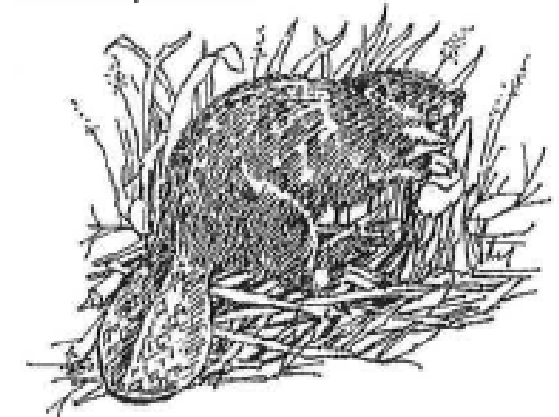
Peamouth Chub

This chub is the second most abundant non-salmon fish species, behind starry flounder, in the estuary. They frequently inhabit off-channels, and are caught primarily in late April through October; peak catches are in June.

MAMMALS



Mammals, unfortunately, are not as easy to observe as birds. For this reason, there is no point in specifying where you might see a certain mammal, with the possible exception of sea lions. It does help to know which animals you might encounter where, although seeing them is as much chance due chance as it is patiently, quietly waiting. And it does not hurt to notice other signs of their presence, such as nibbled or bent plants, foot prints, fur or hair, trails and mammal poop (called scat). Here's a brief description of the more common estuary mammals.



Beaver

This large rodent is rich brown in color, with a scaly, naked tail shaped like a flat paddle about six

inches wide. It is mainly nocturnal, although occasionally seen by day. With its huge chestnut colored front teeth, it eats the bark and small twigs of trees, and stores branches and small sections of logs underwater near its lodge. The beaver has just recently been recognized for its role in water conservation and flood prevention. Its many dams help store water for times of drought and prevent or reduce flooding quite effectively.

Black-tailed Deer (Mule Deer)

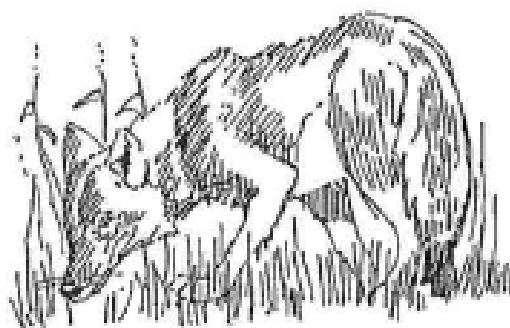
This deer has a stocky body with sturdy legs. In summer, its coat is reddish or yellowish brown and grayish in the winter. The throat patch, rump patch and inside of its ears are white. Its tail is black or dark brown. These deer have large ears that move independently and almost constantly, hence the name, mule deer. Primarily active in mornings, evenings, and on moonlit nights, they may also be active at midday in winter. Black-tailed deer have a stiff-legged bounding gait, with back legs then front legs moving together. They are also good swimmers.

California Sea Lion

It is slender, brown and appears black when wet. Males are up to eight feet long, with high foreheads, weighing 600 lb, while females weigh 200 lb. This is the fastest aquatic carnivore, swimming up to 25 mph when pressed, often porpoising along at the surface. It uses sonar for underwater navigation and finds fish and squid at night, spending much of the day sleeping on islands. Killer whales and sharks are its predators.

Coyote

The coyote, or brush wolf, looks like a medium-sized dog. It is gray or reddish gray, with rusty legs, feet and ears; its throat and belly are whitish. The coyote is a night hunter, but is often seen any time of day, searching for small rodents



and rabbits within a ten-mile radius. Its den is usually in the ground, but it will use other shelter. The coyote can run more than 40 mph for short distances. In the evening, they call to each other using a series of high-pitched yaps and yips.

Harbor Seal

The Harbor Seal is smaller than the California Sea Lion, only five feet long, weighs up to 225 pounds. This seal is iron-gray with brown spots, brown with gray spots or silvery gray. No ears are visible. Most likely seen at the mouths of rivers and in shallow harbors, spending most of its time on shore. The harbor seal eats fish, shellfish and squid and can remain underwater for up to 20 minutes. It "hauls" out on land to give birth.

Mink

This weasel-like mammal is rich dark brown with a distinctive white chin patch, and a slightly bushy tail. The mink, only a foot to 17 inches long, is an excellent swimmer and is mainly found near streams and lakes. It hunts after dark for small mammals, birds, eggs, frogs, crayfish and fish. The mink's den is typically in a stream or lake bank.

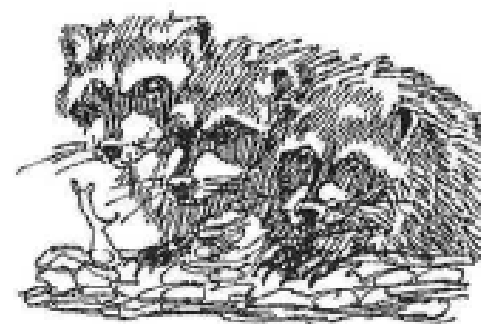
Muskrat

Its tail is what gives this animal away. At 14 inches long, with rich brown fur, the muskrat's long naked, scaly, black tail is shaped like a boat rudder, with flat sides. Its conical

house of marsh vegetation, two to three feet above water, belies its presence in marshes. It also burrows into stream banks to create a den. The entrances are always underwater. The muskrat eats mostly aquatic vegetation, but also a few clams, frogs and fish.

Opossum

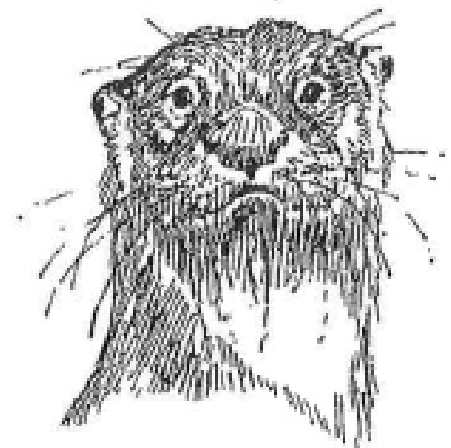
This is the only mammal in North America whose young mature in a special marsupial pouch. About the size of a house cat, the opossum has a heavier body and a pointed nose. Its face is white, ears black and long and its grasping tail is ratlike. It prefers farmland, but also lives in woods and along streams. The opossum is usually only active at night, searching for fruits, vegetables, nuts, meat, eggs and insects. It will live in almost any sheltering hole, including hollow logs or beneath buildings, often in cities. May feign death by playing "possum" when cornered.



Raccoon

The raccoon is about the size of small dog, but with a foot-long tail with distinct whitish rings on it. Its face looks concealed by the black mask over its eyes; its body is salt and pepper colored. Home is along streams and lakes near wooded areas or rock cliffs, where it can den in hollow logs or rock crevices. Another night hunter, it eats fruits, nuts, grains, insects, frogs, crayfish, bird eggs—anything it can get its little hands on, of-

ten dunking its food in water before eating.



River Otter

It has an elongated body (up to 30 inches long), dark brown fur with a paler belly, prominent whitish whiskers, and a long tail thick at the base and gradually tapering to a point. The River Otter is active by day if not disturbed by human activity, looking for fish, frogs, crayfish and other watery goodies in the streams and lakes it calls home. It has a streamlined body, rudder-like tail, and ears and nostrils with valves to keep out water. Its permanent den is often in a river bank, with entrances both below and above the water line.

Townsend Vole

This mouse-like creature is one of the larger voles at six inches long, plus a two to three-inch tail. It is typically blackish-brown with a gray belly and ears that stand up well above its fur. This vole is active day or night. Home is any moist field or meadow, usually near water. Its presence can be detected by narrow runways (1-2 inches wide) through matted grass, small piles of brownish droppings, and short pieces of grass stems along these runways.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Reptiles and amphibians are even more secretive than mammals. You are most apt to find reptiles during the summer. Snakes can be seen warming themselves in the sun or heard slithering behind tall grasses. Frogs can be found or heard near ponds or other bodies of permanent water with vegetation.

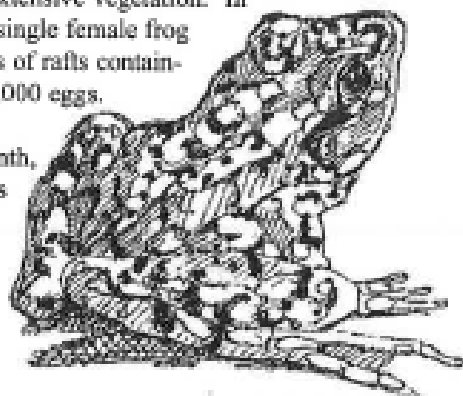
Common Garter Snake

This snake's color is highly varied, but back and side stripes are usually well-defined. Red blotches or a double row of alternating black spots are often present between stripes. The garter snake is the most common in most of North America. It is active during the day and most frequently seen amid moist vegetation where it searches for frogs, toads, salamanders, and earthworms, and occasionally eats small fish and mice. It hibernates in great numbers in community dens in its northerly range. Ill-tempered when first captured, it will bite or expel musk, but it tames quickly and becomes docile.

Northern Red-legged Frog

This is a large, reddish-brown to gray frog, with many poorly defined dark specks and blotches. Its underside is yellow with a wash of red on lower abdomen and hind legs. It is usually found near ponds or other permanent water with extensive vegetation. In the water, a single female frog can lay globs of rafts containing up to 20,000 eggs.

Eggs hatch within a month, with tadpoles metamorphosing into frogs six to 24 months later.



Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Guide

PLANTS

Wetland and estuary plants are typical and abound here. The following are descriptions of the most common plants.



Cattails

Cattails have long, flat, narrow leaves that are 1-2 cm. wide. This is a semiaquatic plant that is generally found in marshes. Cattail provides important habitat and food for many marsh animals, including wrens, blackbirds, waterfowl and muskrats. A number of coastal aboriginal people wove leaves of cattails and bulrushes into mats for bedding, sitting or kneeling on in canoes, as insulation for winter homes, or for capes, hats, blankets, or bags. Cattail seed fluff was used as stuffing for pillows and mattresses, as a wound dressing and for diapers.

Eelgrass

This is a partially floating marine perennial with leafy, flattened stems. It thrives in intertidal, sheltered shores and forms colonies on muddy substrates especially in estuaries. The

crisp, sweet rhizomes and leaf-bases of eelgrass and surf grass were eaten fresh or dried into cakes for winter food by coastal Indians. It was also served at special feasts.

Long stemmed bulrush

It has a single, sharply triangular, long stem. It is found in fresh and brackish marshes, shores, wet meadows and ditches. Bulrush is one of the most widespread flowering plants, found on several continents. Coastal Indians used the stems as foundation material for beautiful wrapped-twine baskets made from sedge, and also for weaving basket lids and handles. "Bulrush" has nothing to do with rushing bulls; it is a corruption of pole-rush because the plant grows in pools of water.

Nootka rose

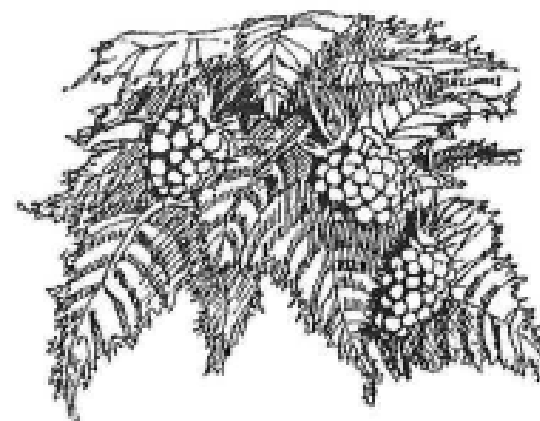
This rose has large prickles at the base of each leaf. The flower is pink and large (4-8 cm. across). It is found in a variety of generally open habitats, shorelines, meadows, thickets, streamside areas and roadsides. Branches of all species of wild rose along with skunk cabbage leaves, fern fronds, pine needles, or salal-were sometimes used in steaming pits, cooking baskets and root-storage pits.

Red alder

This is a deciduous tree with thin, gray, smooth bark, often covered with white patches of lichens. The leaves are irregularly and sharply toothed leaf margins that are rolled under. It is an aggressive, fast-growing, but short-lived hardwood (old at 50 years) that thrives on moist, disturbed sites. Its wood, the best for smoking salmon and other fish, is soft and even grained, and is still used for making feast bowls, masks, rattles and a variety of other items. Indians sometimes ate the inner bark in the spring, as it was highly valued for medicinal qualities.

Sitka spruce

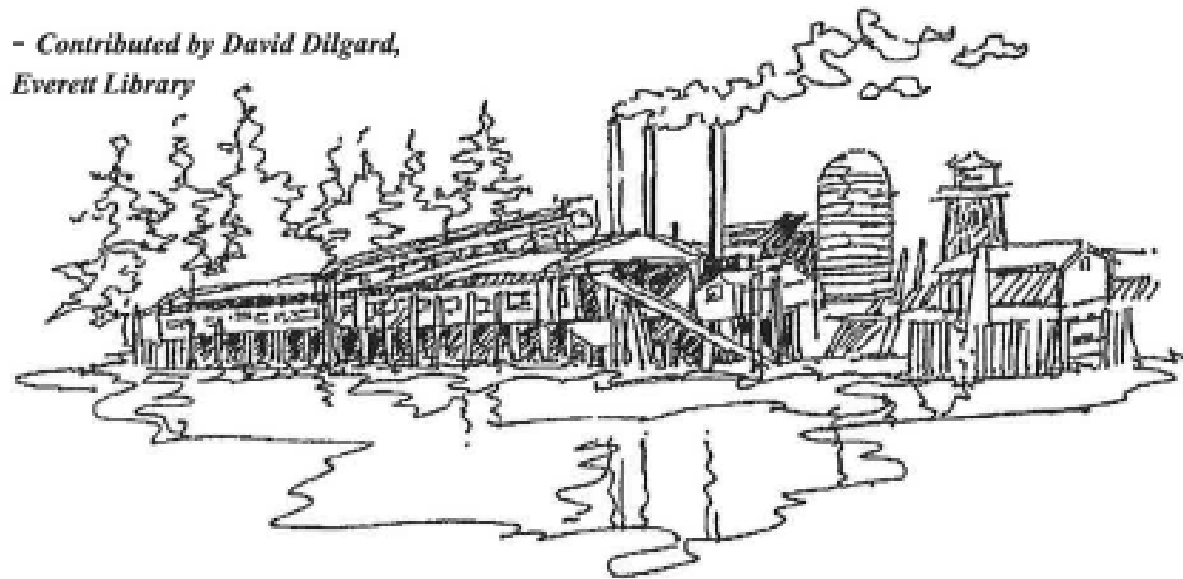
A large tree with long, horizontal main branches and drooping branches, it is easily identified by its sharp needles that point out on all sides. The needles were believed to give it special powers for protection against evil thoughts. Indians used the boughs in winter dance ceremonies to protect the dancers and to scare spectators. Among coastal Indian tribes, the inner bark was eaten fresh or dried into cakes and eaten with berries. The young shoot is an excellent source of vitamin C. The pitch was often chewed for pleasure and used as medicine for burns, boils, slivers, gonorrhea, syphilis, colds, sore throats, internal swellings, rheumatism and toothaches.



Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Guide

HISTORY

- Contributed by David Dilgard,
Everett Library



Everett and its neighboring estuary have a remarkable and lengthy history, starting with the first humans to live here, the Tulalip Indians. These native people took advantage of the area's plentiful fish and wildlife. Settlers, who did not arrive until the late 1800s, were attracted by the area's abundant timber resources. Timber harvesting led to the development of sawmills and other timber related industries along the banks of the estuary's rivers and sloughs. Even today, timber mill log rafts float on the north end of the estuary.

At the turn of the century, agricultural development at the estuary increased on its flat and fertile land. Diking and draining activities were used to control the constant flooding of this area, and created the most drastic changes in the estuary. At least 19,000 acres of wetlands were converted to agricultural uses and 44 miles of levees were built since dikes were used starting in 1867. Diking and draining confined the rivers and sloughs to steeply sloped earthen walls and reduced riparian vegetation and dramatically decreased wildlife habitat. Agricultural practices and dike maintenance still

continue today. A decline in timber and a shift from harbor-dependent industries led to the certain death of large industries and lumber mills along the water ways. In most cases, only abandoned buildings or foundations remain.

The following is a list of historic locations and events accessible by foot, car or watercraft. Refer to the accompanying map for location.

1. Vancouver's Anchorages, 1792.

Captain George Vancouver made three anchorages in the summer of 1792 in Possession Sound. The Captain anchored immediately off Mukilteo, between Hat and Camano Islands, and adjacent to Tulalip Bay, where on, June 4, 1792, he claimed possession of this region for George III of England, hence, Possession Sound to the west of Everett. Port Gardner Bay was named by Vancouver for Sir Alan Gardner of the British Admiralty. Whidbey Island, like Puget Sound itself, bears the name of an officer under Vancouver's command.

2. Early Harbor Development, 1892-95

An important part of the plan to develop an industrial city at the west end of the Great Northern Railway was the construction of an elaborate harbor. Though the design was never fully carried out, certain elements of it can be seen on Jetty Island, which fully evolved from a breakwater installed to protect the inner harbor channel, the 10th Street Dock (now backfilled), and an extension of the peninsular bayfront. When initially undertaken the 10th Street Dock was a finger pier extending westward so far from shore that local residents jokingly referred to it and the mill that stood at its western end as "The Lighthouse".

3. Lost Mills of the North Waterfront, 1913.

The north part of Everett's bayfront once hosted many sawmills with towering smokestacks and smoldering waste burners. It was once the site of the Fred K. Baker cedar mill, built in 1913. It became the Hulbert mill in 1920, producing as much as 80,000 feet of lumber and a third of a million shingles per day. Located below 10th Street, the Hulbert mill was consumed by a spectacular four alarm fire on August 3, 1956. Likewise, it's neighbor, the Jamison shingle mill, went up in flames 11 years to the month later, with 100 firefighters struggling for three hours to control the flames.

4. The Catholic Mission of Father Chirouse, 1857.

North of the mouth of the Snohomish River was one of the earliest European settlements in what would become Snohomish County. The Catholic mission near Quilceda Creek was established by Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse in 1857. Father Chirouse eventually moved to Mission Beach at Tulalip Bay. His earlier loca-



tion is still known as Priest Point.

5. From Indians to Shingle Mill

The northwest tip of the Everett peninsula, known today as Preston Point or Blackman's Point, was the principal winter village of the Snohomish Tribe. This fortified community was surrounded by a cedar palisade to defend its inhabitants from the raids of the Southern Kwakiutl and other northern tribes who came to Puget Sound seeking slaves. After the Tulalip Reservation was created this spot was the site of a hotel and store operated by the Preston brothers. The site would eventually host Everett's first shingle mill, built by the Blackman brothers, that began production early in 1892.

6. Pioneer Doctor and Horticulturist, 1863

The most westerly island of the Snohomish River Estuary was named after a prominent Seattle physician, Dr. Henry A. Smith. As early as 1863, Dr. Smith expressed interest in diking and draining

the delta of the Snohomish River for agricultural use. Famed as the interpreter (or perhaps the author) of the controversial Chief Seattle speech, Smith cultivated a remarkable orchard and served as physician for the Tulalip Reservation while residing on Smith Island. He returned to his farm at Smith's Cove in Seattle in the 1870s.

7. The Last of Everett's Weyerhaeuser Mills, 1953-1992.

The Weyerhaeuser Mill was located along the northeast portion of Preston Point. In the Spring of 1992, Weyerhaeuser Mill C, a pulp mill completed in 1953 which once produced 330 tons of pulp per day, closed down and ended a local Weyerhaeuser presence which stretched back 90 years. Convinced by rail magnate and neighbor Jim Hill to locate at the west end of his GN line, the Weyerhaeusers began their involvement in lumber production in 1902 with a pilot project mill at Everett. The towering stack of Mill C is a reminder of the days when Everett was a bustling "City of Smokestacks" which literally darkened the skies with evidence of its industrial prowess.

8. Whaleback Shipyard, 1894

An important part of the original Hewitt/Colby plan for Everett was a plant to build an un-

usual type of steel-hulled ship, known as a whaleback. Though they caused a great stir in marine transport on the Great Lakes, the whalebacks were less of a success on the high seas. One vessel was completed at Everett, the City of Everett, which at 365 feet was the largest ship ever built in the Pacific Northwest up to that time. It was launched here with gala ceremony on October 24, 1894. In 1915, the Weyerhaeuser Company built the plant known as Mill B on the same spot. The Weyerhaeuser Office Building, now used by the Chamber of Commerce at the entrance to Marina Village (14th Street and Marine View Drive), stood for many years at Mill B.

9. Ill-Fated Smelter, 1894-1914

On the bluff behind the whaleback shipyard stood a smelter intended to handle the rich ores expected from the Monte Cristo mining district in the Cascade Mountains, about 30 miles east of Everett. A rail line connecting the mines and the smelter was closed down just before the First World War. (Though long-since erased from the landscape, the ghost of this early industry has surfaced recently with revelations of buried toxic deposits.)

10. Ferry-Baker Mill, 1902

On the riverfront, opposite an island that is still known by the company name once stood one of Everett's most prominent early sawmills, the Ferry-Baker. Actually constructed for the Rice Lumber Company, the plant became Ferry-Baker in the spring of 1902. Among the early employees was a young man named Garfield Kirk, who became something of a Northwest legend as a champion shingle-packer. Kirk held the regional title off and on for the next two decades.

11. Great Northern's Delta Yards, 1902

In 1902, Great Northern Railway founder



James J. Hill installed a substantial rail facility on the Everett riverfront known as The Delta Yards, incorporating shops and a roundhouse. Hill had recently acquired what was left of the Everett Land Company, the Hewitt-Colby-Rockefeller syndicate, and was busy making Everett into the sort of rail-head port that could fill the freight cars of the Great Northern with products. The Delta Yards were impressive evidence of the intentions of the man known as "The Empire Builder".

12. Sawmill to Langus Park, 1892-1994

Providing much-needed public access to the recreational possibilities of the Snohomish River, Langus Riverside Park is one of the City of Everett's newest city parks. Named for a much-revered Everett city council member, Langus Park is located close to the location of the old Hart Brothers sawmill. The sawmill was Everett's first lumber factory, which entered production in 1892.

13. Max Miller's Stomping Ground, 1910-1915

Perhaps the most prominent literary figure with Everett roots, Max Miller grew up on the river. After the huge success of his first book, *I Cover the Waterfront*, Miller went on to publish a number of works. They alluded to the boyhood pleasures indulged in along this stretch of the river, including swimming where you weren't supposed to, playing cannibal on the sandbars, and rubbing

elbows with the hobos who caught freights at the nearby Delta Yards.

14. Canyon Mill, 1907-1989

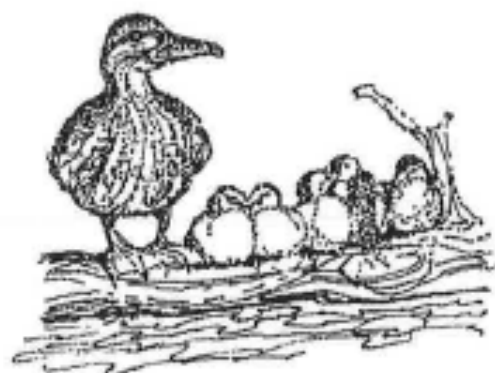
On the lower promontory projecting eastward into the Snohomish River delta, the Canyon Lumber Company was built in 1907. Though long dormant, the plant survived until the late 1980's, the last of Everett's old lumber mills to close down. Many of the mill workers lived in homes in the Mitchell Addition, located on the bluff visible to the west, above the old mill site.

15. Junction of Waterways

The Snohomish River channel, which hugs the shoreline of the Everett peninsula below this point, was initially shallow and difficult to navigate. As a result, early river traffic used Steamboat Slough, joining the Snohomish River route at its junction with Union and Deadwater Sloughs. Part of Henry Hewitt's original harbor design involved the installation of locks at this point in the river, with a corresponding set of tide gates at the south end of the bayfront harbor.

16. Machinery For Forest and Mill, 1893-1913

One of the industries encircling Hewitt's City of Smokestacks was the Sumner Iron Works plant on the east side of the Snohomish River, just south of the mouth of Deadwater Slough. The Sumner foundry and machine shop produced steam engines for mills and logging camps, as well as other machinery such as their patented shingle saw. There was even a brief attempt at ship building. Initially reached by a bridge at the foot of Everett Avenue, the site is now isolated and overgrown. It was abandoned by the company after a disastrous fire in April 1913.





17. Spithillis Wharf, 1892

Half Native American and half Scot, Neil Spithill was an industrious homesteader at Everett who had an impressive reputation as a builder of wharfs and bridges. His warehouse and wharf at the foot of California Avenue (now swept over by a modern bridge) was an early commercial focal point. In the hall above his warehouse, benefits were held to raise money for Everett's first bucket brigade. On June 20, 1892 a traveling company performed "Uncle Tom's Cabin" there, Everett's first taste of professional drama.

18. A Plethora of River Steamers, 1892

When word leaked out that Jim Hill's railroad would first touch tidewater at Everett and millionaire John D. Rockefeller was helping to build a city there, hordes of people flooded onto the peninsula. Many of them came via paddlewheel river steamers like the Mabel, May Queen and Cascade to Swallow's Dock, at the river foot of Hewitt Avenue. During the townsite boom of 1892, Swallow's Dock was literally abuzz with commercial and passenger traffic. Today the Hewitt Avenue bridge approach marks the site.

19. The Pacific-Chestnut Community of 1891

Before platted townsite lots were available, a rustic cluster of businesses was thrown together in the late summer of 1891 at the foot of Pacific Avenue on the Snohomish River. Prominent among these was Boughton Aldrich's Workingmen's Grocery Store, the Brown Land & Engineering Company office and an open-front shack with a canvas roof selling fruit, cigars and newspapers. Proprietor Arthur Baily assembled this primitive structure from pieces of a packaging crate he snagged as it drifted downstream. When Hewitt Avenue was opened up and lots went on sale, the ramshackle colony at the foot of Pacific was dismantled. Within months, the rails of the Great Northern replaced it.

20. Departed Riverfront Mills

Along the southeastern flank of the Everett peninsula were some noteworthy industries, long-since lost. After more than 60 years of lumber production (sometimes as much as 5 million feet per month), the Eclipse Mill was destroyed in May 1962 by one of the costliest and most spectacular fires in the city's history. Large crowds watched as 200 firefighters battled the \$2.5 million blaze. Six-hundred thousand dollars worth of warehoused lumber also went up in smoke. Further south was the Walton Mill, whose owners resided for many years in the Rucker Mansion.

21. Indian Wars Incident, 1855

Though it had been traveled by canoe for centuries, the first steam navigation of the Snohomish River took place late in 1855 when the schooner Trask was towed upriver by the iron steamer Traveler. The island to the east bears the name of Colonel Isaac Ebey, leader of the volunteers known as The Northern Rangers. Ebey and his men had dispatched in the Trask to establish a fort preventing hostile Indians from using the

river. The expedition was uneventful but shortly thereafter Ebey was beheaded by Haida warriors on his Whidbey Island homestead.

22. Vanished Industry, 1893-1973

For eighty years an industrial landmark at the bend of the lower Snohomish, the Lowell paper mill was demolished in the early 1970s. It was originally a part of the diverse industrial base installed by Hewitt and Colby's Everett Land Company in the early 1890s. The machinery was carried around the tip of South America by the steel hulled whaleback steamer, C.W. Wetmore. Long the focal point of the community of Lowell (now a neighborhood in the City of Everett), the paper mill is still a vivid and enduring memory for many residents.

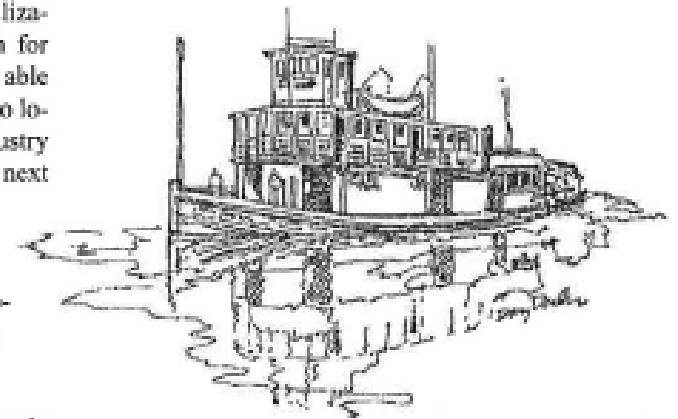
23. From Necropolis to City of Industry

Pioneer logger and entrepreneur E.D. Smith can be said to have begun the history of the townsite of Lowell when he began logging there in 1863, but it had once been the site of a Snohomish Indian necropolis (a large, elaborate cemetery) called Chi-cha-dee-ah. Recent archaeological finds indicate humans lived there for at least two thousand years. Smith's log flume once plunged down the slope, carrying gigantic logs to the river; his lumber mill waiting at the bend. The realization of Smith's dreams for industrialization for his town really arrived, however, when he was able to bargain the Hewitt and Colby syndicate into locating a major paper mill at Lowell, an industry that was to be the mainstay of Lowell for the next eighty years.

24. Territorial Mayhem, 1874.

Among the more sensational crimes of violence of the territorial period was the death of Charles Serbert, who was hacked to death by his son in February 1874 on the homestead just across the river from Lowell. Brought

to trial after a lengthy manhunt and an escape from jail, the younger Serbert was judged to be insane, in part as a result of abuse inflicted by his father.



CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on lodging, campgrounds, dining, fishing, hunting, tours, arts, festivals and other events in and near the Snohomish River Estuary, contact:

Blackman's House Museum

Wed-Sun 118 Ave. B
Snohomish, WA 98290
360-568-5235

Everett Area Convention & Visitor Bureau

425-252-5181
1710 W. Marine View Drive
Everett, WA 98201
www.snobiz.org

Everett Parks and Recreation Department

425-257-8300
802 Mukilteo Blvd.
Everett, WA 98203

Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department

425-339-1208
3000 Rockefeller Ave.
Everett, WA 98201-4046
www.co.snohomish.wa.us/parks

Snohomish County Tourism Bureau

425-348-5802
909 SE Everett Mall Way, C300
Everett, WA 98208
www.snohomish.org
(Ask for the Official Visitor Guide)

Snohomish County Visitor Information Center

101 128th Street SE (I-5 exit 186)
Everett, WA

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

425-775-1311
16018 Mill Creek Blvd
Mill Creek, WA 98012

HELP PRESERVE THE ESTUARY

The estuary and its inhabitants need your help. The surrounding cities are encroaching on the delicate wetlands. Wildlife is being threatened by hunters, loss of habitat, and contamination of their environment. The estuary is even suffering from wetland destroying exotic plants like Spartina and Purple Loosestrife. There are many ways you can help preserve this incredible natural resource. Contact these organizations if you are interested in donations, volunteering or some other form of help:

Everett City Hall

425-257-8700
3002 Wetmore Ave.
Everett, WA 98201

Everett Parks and Recreation Department

425-257-8300
802 Mukilteo Blvd.
Everett, WA 98203

North Sound Sea Kayak Association

P.O.Box 1520
Everett, WA 98201

Pilchuck Audubon Society

425-252-0926
2829 Rockefeller Ave.
Everett, WA 98201

Port of Everett

425-259-3164
1720 W. Marine View Drive
Everett, WA 98201

Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department

425-339-1208
3000 Rockefeller Ave.
Everett, WA 98201-4046

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FIELD NOTES

ESTUARY BIRD LIST

Use this list to keep track of the many estuary bird species you will see.

Key:

- X = commonly seen
- = infrequently seen

Common Name	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
American Coot	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X
American Goldfinch				-					-			
Bald Eagle	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X
Barn Swallow				-	X	X	X	X	-			
Belted Kingfisher	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
Bewick's Wren					-	-	-	-				
Black-headed Grosbeak						X	X	X				
Bushtit											-	-
Canada Goose	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
Cedar Waxwing					-	X	X	X	X	X		
Common Merganser	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cooper's Hawk				-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	
Dark-eyed Junco	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Downy Woodpecker	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Glaucous Gull									X	X	X	X
Great Blue Heron	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Great Horned Owl	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hutton's Vireo					-							
Kill Deer		X	X	X	X							
Osprey	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-				
Pileated Woodpecker	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pine Siskin	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Purple Finch				-	-	-	-					
Red-tailed Hawk	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Red-winged Blackbird					X	X	X				-	
Ring-billed Gull					X	X	X					
Sharp-shinned Hawk					-	-	-	X	X	X		
Song Sparrow	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
Swainson's Thrush				-	X	X	-					
Warbling Vireo					X	X						
Western Tanager					X	X	X	-				
Northern Harrier					X	X	X	X	X	X		

TRIP REPORT SURVEY

Please take a minute to fill out this survey. We will use this information to update the next edition of the guide. You can either remove this page or photo copy the survey to return your responses.

Are you from Snohomish County? ☐ Y ☐ N

If not, where? _____

Which section of the guide was the most useful?

Which sections would you omit or revise?

Where did you see the most birds?

What birds did you see?

What other wildlife did you see?

What kayak/canoe route did you take?

Would you visit the estuary again?

Why, or why not?

How would you rate your experience:

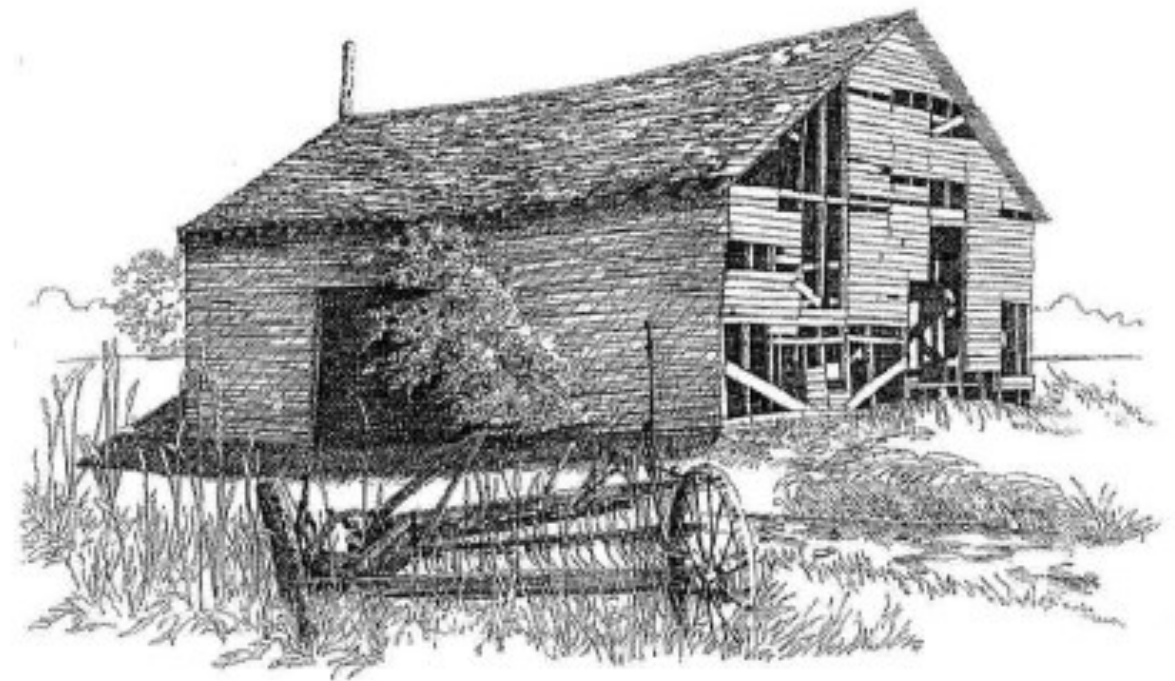
☐ poor ☐ fair ☐ good ☐ excellent

What recommendations or comments would you make to Snohomish County Parks regarding future estuary development?

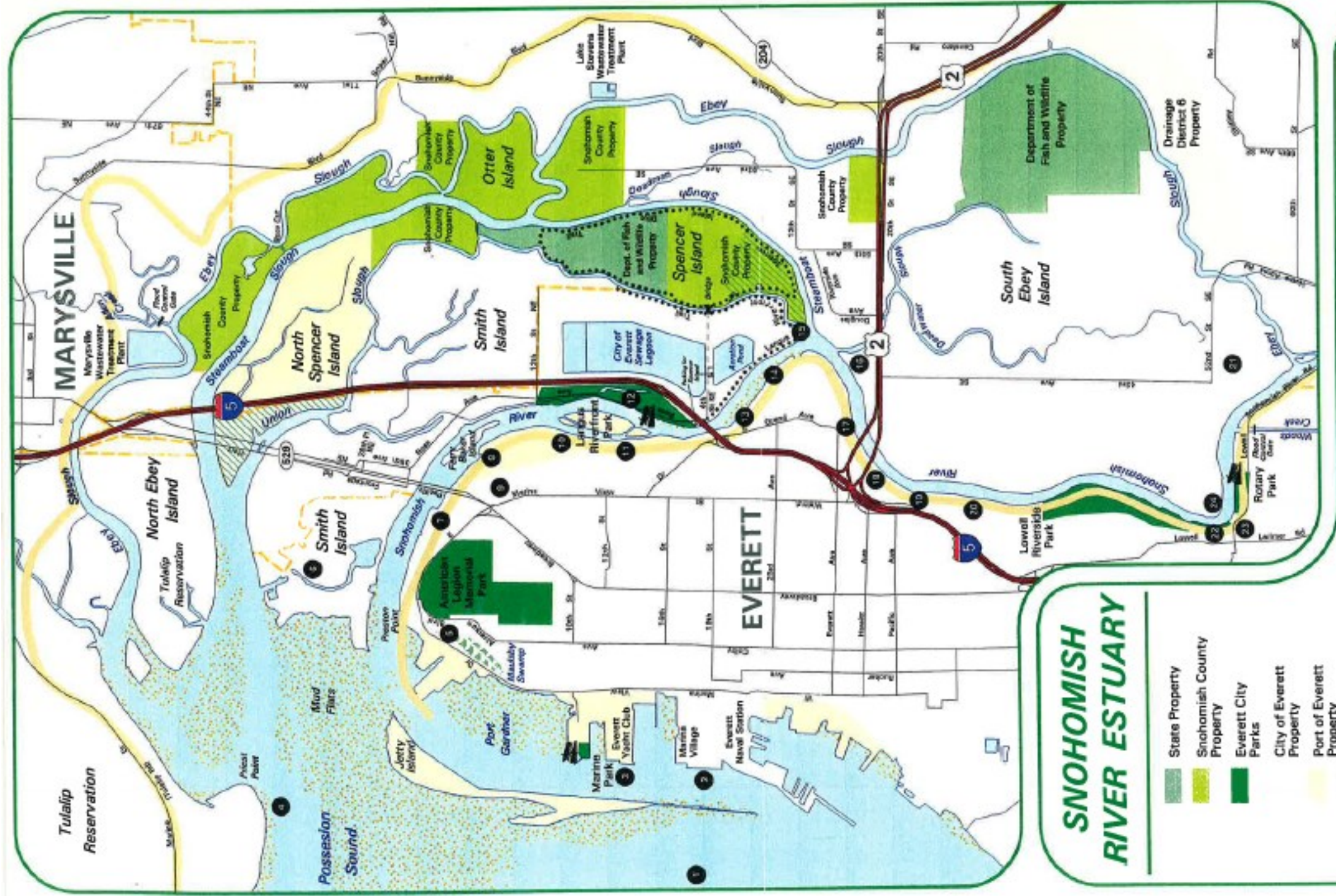
Return to:

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Snohomish County
Parks and Recreation
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